UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

PROMOTING ECOTOURISM IN THE SUHUM KRABOAH COALTAR

DISTRICT OF THE EASTERN REGION OF GHANA

BY

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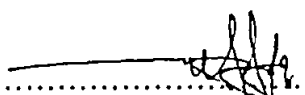FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (TOURISM)

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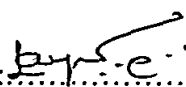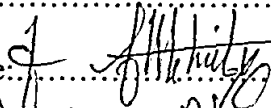
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DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

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SUPERVISORS DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the necessary means to promote ecotourism in the Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District owing to the potential ecotourism attractions the district abounds with.

Forty respondents were purposively selected in the district for in-depth interview, using an interview guide. Data collected were analysed qualitatively.

Findings of the study generally indicated that respondents are willing to participate in the ecotourism venture since they believe it will aid them, especially in their developmental agendas. According to the study, landowners are prepared to give out their land for the venture. However, a majority of them would not sell it (land) out entirely to developers but rather prefer some share from the proceeds. The study also found the Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District to be a conflict-free destination. However, one cannot tell whether the good atmosphere of peace the district is enjoying now shall continue to exist after the arrival of tourists. Considering the results on the study, therefore, it is possible to state that Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District is poised for a successful ecotourism development.

It is evident form the study that stakeholders will prefer the bottom-up approach of development to ensure that their views are part of the ecotourism planning and implementation of the venture.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Mr. Emmanuel Richard Odame and Madam Nancy Kate Addo and to all my siblings: Enoch, Alberta, Grace and Joshua, whose encouragement, support, and sacrifices made many distant journeys possible.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Tourism is a major socio-economic activity throughout the world. The industry employs over 112 million people worldwide and it is used to invest over US $ 350 billion per year in new facilities and capital equipment, and generates annually more than US $ 2500 billion gross output. This amounts to 5.5 percent of the world's total gross national product (Elert, 1994).

Owing to its potentials to address some economic problems in both developed and developing countries, much attention is being given to the sector, Ghana's tourism sector being no exception. The contribution of tourism to Ghana's GDP in 1994 was estimated to be 3.5 percent and was projected to rise to 3.9 per cent in 2000 and 5.9 percent of the targeted GDP in 2010 (NTDP, 1996). In 1996, Ghana earned over US $ 248 million from tourism trade, whereas that of 1997 was over US $ 297 million (MOT, 1998). According to the Ministry of Tourism (Ghana), "The tourism sub-sector will continue to be a major source of foreign exchange earnings" (MOT, 1997)

However, tourism is considerably causing harm to the environment. As stated by Pigram (1995), "Tourism can certainly contribute to environmental degradation and can be self destructive". Owing to this there have been groups

like the Green Peace and Green Flag International, among others, resisting the negative environmental practices which degrade the environment.

Given the potential benefits this sector presents in our national economic agenda, the protracted marginalization of the sector due to the related environmental concerns can be too expensive for us to risk. The relevant question, which readily arises, is, how do we promote this sector in an environmentally conscious and sustainable manner? Ecotourism thus presents us with a laudable option of killing two birds with just a stone. That is, while addressing our socio-economic concerns issues of sound environmental practices are not left to chance.

According to (Scarce et al, 1992) "Ecotourism is an enlightening nature-travel experience that contributes to conservation of ecosystem while respecting the integrity of the host community". Community-based ecotourism therefore provides tourism revenues for planning and management, stimulates economic development through tourism expenditures, and creates jobs for local people and markets for local goods (GTB/PCG/NCRC Project, 1996).

The development of ecotourism in Third World countries appeals to destination areas, tourism enterprises and tourists alike. Less developed countries like Ghana have comparative advantage in terms of unspoiled natural environment. It is estimated that about 650, 000 people visit the natural parks and protected areas of Kenya each year, spending about US $ 350 million (Elert, 1995). For instance, in Rwanda, tourists interest in a single specific, the mountain gorilla (Gorilla gorilla), was estimated to bring the country over

US $ 4,000,000 a year, making ecotourism the country's second largest industry (Boo, 1990). The development of ecotourism therefore, provides an opportunity to capitalize on these bountiful natural attractions to turn our fragile economic situations around. Indeed, the exemplary case of Kenya cannot be underestimated. In 1981 and 1990, tourism receipts via ecotourist destinations in Kenya were 2.55 and 5.8% respectively while that of Madagascar was 0.2% and 1.6% (IMF 1992).

The heightened awareness of the adverse socio–cultural and environmental impacts of uncontrolled mass tourism is worth noting. Currently, the number of tourists to "eco" destinations is low as compared to mass tourism. In Ghana, the number can be balanced if all our potential ecotourism attractions are developed. Nevertheless, most are still lying in their raw state. The Dodi and Dwarf islands in the Eastern Region are examples (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001).

According to the 'Daily Graphic' of September 16, 2003, the country's ecotourism potentials, if well developed, can generate nearly $ 2.25 billion by the end of 2013. The paper further estimates that with a baseline of 75,000 ecotourists, Ghana is capable of earning more than $ 75 million per annum. Ecotourism in a Third World country like Ghana is therefore important for, it will serve as a relief to some of the economic problems the country is facing at the moment. At present, ecotourism activities are limited to only five Wildlife Protected areas, namely; Kakum National Park, Mole National Park, Shai Hills, Asumatza, and Buabeng-Fiema (Nature Conservation Research Center, 1998). The Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC) estimates that visitors to

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these Parks increased from 5,688 in 1992 to 40,733 in 1999. The above estimates clearly show that the 'wealth' of the country (Ghana) is in no doubt stored in ecotourism. What is more is the exploitation of the other attractions for the economic benefit of the country as a whole.

Statement of the problem

Ecotourism is becoming the most significant tourism market segment for many third world countries. Countries like Kenya, Costa Rica and Madagascar have seen rapid growth in tourists' arrivals at ecotourism destinations. A World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) study estimates that out of $ 55 billion earned from tourism for developing countries in 1998, about $ 12 billion was as a result of ecotourism (EIU, 1992). A research by the US Travel Data Center shows that over 8 million Americans took part in ecotours sponsored by over 300 tour companies in 1991. It is an undisputed fact that Ghana cannot compete with Kenya in terms of the latter's numerous wildlife, potential ecotourism sites and appreciable climatic conditions. The government's 15-year Development Plan (NTDP) that focuses on the development of ecotourism, in at least every district in the country, is laudable. However, most of these districts or communities with ecotourism attractions are not advertised to both domestic and international tourists.

Ecotourism, according to (Ryel 1991), has evolved as a result of two basic facts of modern life – the struggle of poor nations to catch up with developing nations by exploiting their splendid natural resources, and the

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concern of rich nations for the Earth's preservation. Ghana's ecotourism resources can be exploited to address some socio – economic problem the country is facing, while at the same time the practice of eco – friendly is not overlooked.

The Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District (SKCD) in the Eastern Region of Ghana is richly endowed with potential ecotourism attractions some of which are waterfalls, war caves, and sacred groves, among others. Nevertheless, the promotion of these attractions is in doldrums.

The purpose of this study therefore is to highlight tourists attractions in SKCD. Specifically, the study will assess the communities' awareness of ecotourism, their willingness to participate in the venture, and their understanding of eco – friendliness. It will also look at the benefits the respective communities and the district assembly will derive from ecotourism.

The following research questions were considered for the study.

1. Are members in the district aware of ecotourism?

2. Will members be willing to participate in an ecotourism venture?

3. How will ecotourism benefit the respective communities as well as the district?

4. Will landowners be willing to give out their land for the business?

5. What would be the pitfalls to the promotion of ecotourism promotion in the district?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to assess how ecotourism could be promoted in the Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District. The specific objectives are to:

1. catalogue potential ecotourism sites in the district;

2. assess the level of ecotourism awareness in SKCD;

3. determine the communities' willingness to participate in ecotourism;

4. examine the pitfalls to promotion of ecotourism in the district;

5. assess the expected benefits of both the host communities and the District Assembly.

Significance of the study

The practice of ecotourism in a developing country (like Ghana) is significant owing to the jobs and income it provides for local people, and educating visitors about the good environmental practices, among others. The practice of sustainability also makes this study more appropriate since ecotourism sees to it that activities that will degrade the environment are avoided. Ecotourism is therefore an opportunity that makes conservation of the natural resource beneficial for today and tomorrow. In addition to these, the study will be helpful, as it will determine whether or not the attraction in the district could be promoted with the full participation of its residents.

It will also highlight the need for promoting ecotourism for the benefit of the district, specifically the rural communities. It will also suggest some good environmental practices by community members and tourists in general. Finally,

this study will also contribute to the existing knowledge on Ecotourism Development as well as act as a reference for further research.

The study area

Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District is study area. It covers an estimated area of 940 km2 located on the southern portion of the Eastern Region. 74 km North-West of Accra (the nation's capital) is Suhum, the district capital (SKCD). According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the district has a population of 166,472. The major occupation of the residents is agriculture, which absorbs 70.0% of the total population.
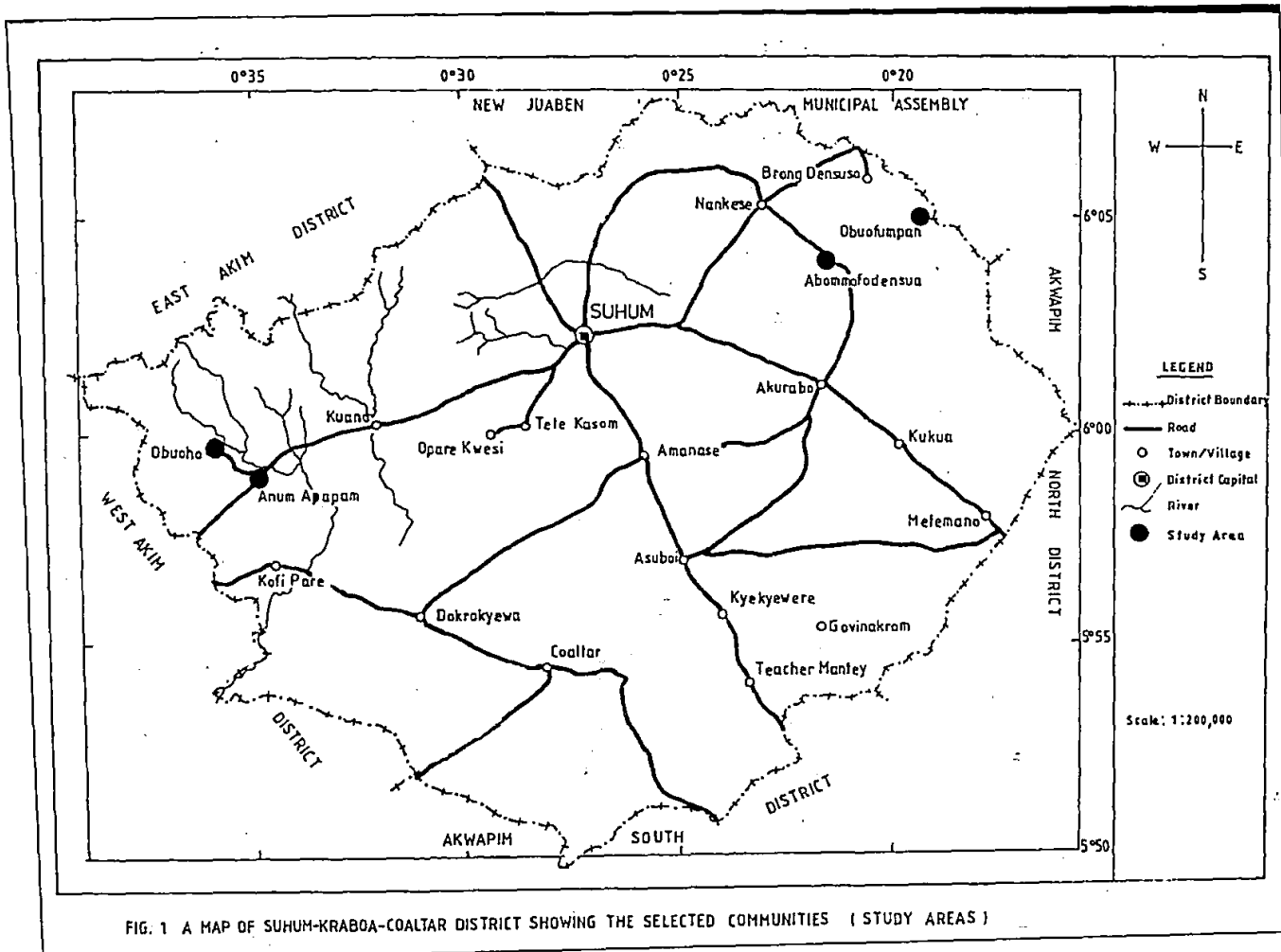
FIG. 1 A MAP OF SUHUM-KRABOA-COALTAR DISTRICT SHOWING THE SELECTED COMMUNITIES (STUDY AREAS)

Figure 1: A map of SKCD showing the selected communities (study areas).

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Physical characteristics

The New Juaben District bounds SKCD to the northeast, Kwaebibirem and East Akim District to the north, West Akim to the West and South, and Akuapim North and Akuapim South Districts to the east (TYMTP 2002-2004). A survey conducted by Kesse-Tagoe and Associates (2002), indicates that the district is located within latitudes 5'45 N and 6' 5'N and latitudes 0' 15'W and 0'45 W.

Land in the district is undulating, with heights ranging between 152m and 340m above sea level. The highest point of 610m is located within the Atewa Range, between the Pabi and Wawase communities in the northern part of the district. The Densu, Suhum, Essiem, Kua and Ayensu are the major rivers in the district (SKCDA 2002).

Climate

The district is located in the forest zone of the country. Average temperature range from 24'C to 29'C. Temperatures are usually high throughout the year. The months of the March and April remain the hottest while December and January always have low temperatures. Relative humidity is always recognized especially during the rainy season-June to September, which records 87% and 91% of rainfall respectively. The dry seasons range from 48% to 52% (SKCD 2002).

Vegetation

  The district is covered by semi-deciduous forest but uncontrolled human activities like lumbering and unprofessional way of farming have drastically removed the quality of the original vegetation, given way for the 'Acheampong' weed, and in some places, elephant grass. The Atewa range forest is the only forest reserve the district can boast of. But illegal lumbering, bush burnings, and hunting, among other human activities, degrading the quality of the forest.

Population

  According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, about 69.6% of the populations were engaged in farming. In 1996, about 67.0% of the populations were in the agriculture sector, showing a minimal shift from agriculture to other sectors.

  The district capital has urban occupation like trade and commerce, restaurants/hotels and banking/insurance. Towns like Asuboi and Nankese have minimal level of urban occupation. The 2000 Population and Housing Census showed that Suhum has 31,044 peoples (SKCDA 2002). Table 1 shows population distributions at the following settlements.

Table 1.

Population distribution of the major settlements in SKCD

SETTLEMENT	POPULATION			
	1960	1970	1984	2000
Suhum	10,193	12,421	19,298	31,044
Nankese	2,245	2,595	3,414	4,627
Coaltar	2,046	1,809	2,500	2,459
Anum-Apapam	1,846	1,412	2,921	5,078
Asuboi	1,377	1,356	2,341	3,021
Akorabo	918	863	1,199	2,080
Teacher Mante	527	580	1,507	2,987
Amanase	395	291	2,853	3,894
Total	19,592	21,327	36,033	55,190

Source: National Population and Housing Census, 2000.

The 2000 Population and Housing Census showed that the population of the district was 166,472, out of this a sex ratio of 97.6 males to 100 females was recorded (NPHC, 2000). The population that falls within the ages of 15-64 years is recognized as the potential labour force that dominates and constitutes 64.6% of the total population.

Ethnicity

Akans who constitute 35% of the population dominate the district. The Krobo/Adangbe follow with 23.0% while Ewes are (22%) of the total population. The Hausas, Kotokolis and Basares make 10.05 while the Guans and Gas are 5.2% and 4.8% respectively. (NPHC, 2002).

Land use pattern

According to the 3-year Medium Term Plan for the district, 74.8% out of the total area of 940km2 is suitable for agricultural production whilst 15% is occupied by human settlements. 7.0% and 3.2% represent lands and forestry, roads and utility lines high-tension electrical installations, and rivers, reservations and slopes, respectively. 430km of the roads in the district are motorable but only 30% of these can be plied throughout the year.

Traditional economy

Seventy percent of the population are engaged in farming. Trade and Commerce attracts 7.5%, Artisans/Tradesmen are 5.1%, Civil/Public servants 4.2%, Food Processing is 4.2%, Transport operators 2.8%, and Sawmilling 1.4%. The Hospitality Industry takes 1.9%; Carvers occupy 2.3% while banking and insurance, 1 %(SKCDA 2002).

The production of handicrafts is another source of employment in the district, especially for the youth. Various items like baskets, woodcarvings, among others, are sold during market days. Castings of gold weights are done in

some of the communities. Most of the women are also in the Palm Oil and Kernel business. 'Akpateshie' distilling is another business after farming for most men adults.

The major markets can be located at Suhum, Amanase, Nankese, Asuboi, Dokrochewa, Coaltar, Anum-Apapam, Akyeasa, Akroabo and Teacher Mante. Market days attract both buyers and sellers from Accra, Koforidua (the regional capital), Tema, Nkawkaw and Lome.

Production of both subsistence and cash crops in the district has contributed immensely to the national economy. Cassava, cocoyam, plantain, yam and maize are among the local staples. Kofi-Pare is noted for her sugar-cane production, while Obuoho is famous for plantain and cocoyam. Tomatos, onion, okra, among others, are produced in some parts of the district but on a small scale.

Many residents depend on fuel wood and charcoal for energy mostly in the rural areas. The raising of livestock, setting of traps, hunting in the nearby forests as well as fishing in rivers and streams around their communities form part of their daily economic activities.

Most areas in the communities have fertile lands for production of cocoa. Almost every family head owns a cocoa farm which was either inherited or cultivated. Owing to the potential of the crop to address the greater percentage of their socio-economic problems, much attention is given to it. The crop is a property to them. Land that is not suitable for cocoa cultivation is used for the production of other important cash crops like the sugar cane.

Residents own part of the community land. There is nothing like stool lands; even if there is, it is very insignificant. The chief is not the owner of the land of his people as pertains in some ethnic societies. Farming employs 70% of the total population. In every farming season, either the landowner or an individual who seeks a piece of land for farming prepares the land. He clears the land by the formation of partnership called 'nnoboa', (a collective self-help group or age mates helping one another in farming activities). An agreement is reached by the two (landowner and a farmer) on how to share the farm produce (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001). This should be either 'abunu' (sharing the farm produce into two equal parts), or 'abusa' (sharing the farm produce into three equal parts). Handicrafts are also produced in some parts of the district. These include carvings of figurines, masks, and drums, among other things.

Suhum is the center of the district where businesses flourish. Other facilities like electricity pull residents in the rural areas to migrate to the town, especially the youth, to learn various types of trade or jobs like auto-mechanics, dressmaking, and hairdressing, among others.
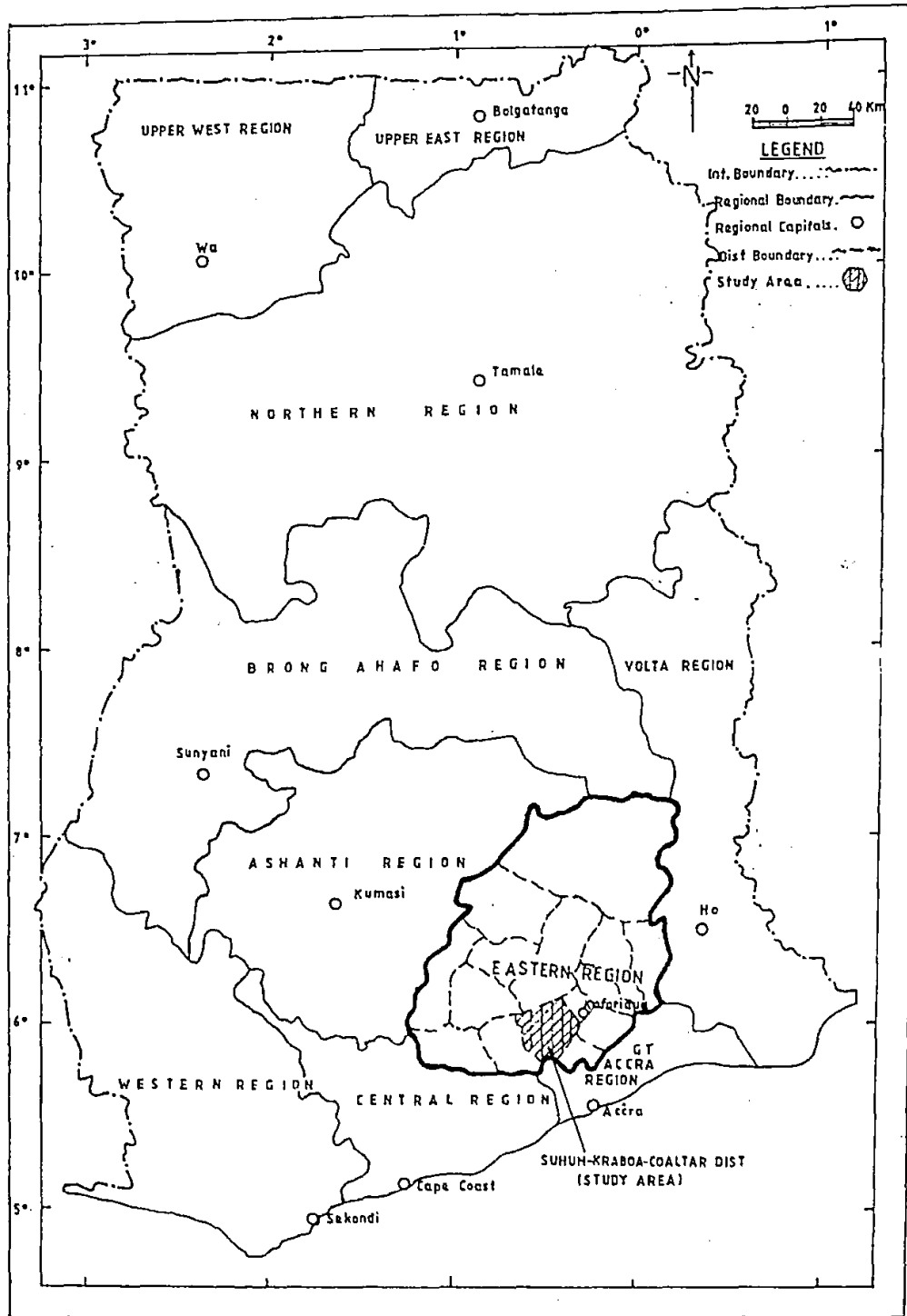
MAP OF GHANA SHOWING THE SUHUM-KRABOA-COALTAR DISTRICT IN THE EASTERN REGION

Figure 2: Map of Ghana showing SKCD.

Infrastructural development

SKCD has both public infrastructure as well as private-owned ones. The public infrastructure include post office, health centers, police stations, primary and senior secondary schools as well as vocational institutions. The district has one government hospital, and a magistrate court located in Suhum. The private-owned facilities include chemical stores, nursery and kindergarten schools, clinics and guesthouses. There are eighteen feeder and six trunk roads in the whole district, which makes transportation difficult especially during the rainy season.

The only post office is in Suhum. Out of more than 350 settlements, only seven (7) of them: Suhum, Kraboah Coaltar, Anum-Apapam, Asuboi, Teacher Mante, Dokrochewa, and Amanase have postal agencies (SKCDA) 2002). Telecommunication systems are limited to only Suhum but radiophones are now in use in some of the communities.

The district facilities include thirteen wells, pipe borne water for the Suhum township only. Thirteen Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit (KVIP)/septic tanks, three banks and two rural banks. Three secondary schools; Suhum Secondary Technical, Presbyterian Secondary, Kraboah Coaltar Secondary Technical, and a Women's Vocational Training Center located at Suhum.

Social services

A total of 13 hand-dug wells are distributed throughout the communities. In many communities bore-holes serve the people with good drinking water

while for others nearby streams and rivers serve the same purpose. In all, 51.1%
of the households have access to potable water from mechanized boreholes
(SKCDA, 2002-2004).

Table 2.

Socio-Economic facilities and services in the Suhum Kraboah
Coaltar District

Facility	Number
Hospital	1
Health Post	2
Health Center	8
Clinic	8(private)
Rural Bank	2
Police Station	3
Post Office	1
Community Tribunal	1
Hotel/Gust House	2
Fire Station	1
Magistrate Court	1
Electricity	6
District Administration Office	1
SSS	3
JSS	18

Table 2. *continued:* Socio-economic facilities and services in the Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District.

Technical/Vocational	3
Primary	18
Nursery	18
Library	1
Market (Daily)	10
Chemical Store	16
KVIP/Septic Tank	13
Well	13
Pipe Borne	1
Bore Hole	9
Banks	3

Source: SKCDA Three Year Medium Term Development Plan (2002-2004)

Conclusion

Ecotourism, by its definition, seeks the welfare of this generation and that of the future, in that it helps to conserve and preserve the resources of a place so that it is not over exploited. The chapter discussed the need to develop our attractions especially that of the developing world since ecotourism has been found to be the panacea of socio-economic development for many developing countries, especially Kenya. The chapter looked at the study area whether its

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location and facilities can pull tourists to the destination. Finally, the statement of the problem, objectives, and the significance of the study as well as the research questions was also included in the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON ECOTOURISM PROMOTION AND MODEL FOR PLANNING ECOTOURISM WITH HOST COMMUNITIES.

Introduction

Ghana, a developing country, has numerous natural attractions. These attractions increase the number of tourist into the country and thereby help address some of her socio-economic problems. However, most of these potential sites have not been promoted. On the other hand, ecotourism in developing countries is seen to be a very good alternative but the development of ecotourism is always a problem. This chapter looks at some of the benefits as well as some negative impacts of tourism on the host communities. The chapter focuses particularly on the negative and positive images of a destination, social conflict erupting as a result of ecotourism, and some constraints to its development. Finally, the chapter examines the model adapted for the study.

The Impact of Ecotourism on Host Community

The host population or the people at the destination and the visitors' lifestyles and cultural would not be the same. These create various problems. The host community, having stayed in small groups, has for years known one another very well. Suddenly, tourists or visitors start to arrive in numbers into their community (Davidson 1993). The presence of visitors, especially when it

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exceeds the carrying capacity, ends up creating various impacts at the destination even to the extent that some attitudes and behaviour of individuals and communities at the destination are changed by the experience of tourist.

Cultural difference is one of the existing factors which set the tourists and the host population apart. The lifestyle of the visitor would be different from that of the people at the destination; this may results in different reactions, especially in terms of religion.

For this reason Christians visiting a Moslem community need to obey regulations governing the community. In order to live with them peacefully, they should not in anyway look down upon the host population's way of worship, dressing, and eating. Visitors from industrialized countries touring a poor community should not show any form of cold lifestyle and attitude towards the host population so that the two groups can live in harmony, (Milne, 1992). The host population will begin to show unfriendly attitude towards visitors who constantly clash with the traditions and customs of the country they are visiting (Davidson, 1993). Tourists who may not want to respect the laws and dignity of the host population and decide to bring the integrity of the host into disrepute would be treated likewise, especially fun-seeking tourists, whose lifestyles, expectations, appearance and customs are totally unlike their own (Hall, 2000).

The argument raised by the above authors is important and needs to be considered when an attraction is to be developed. This is because these problems somehow can cause the venture to collapse. However, there are ways to remedy the problem. In a case where the carrying capacity is exceeded, it is important

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that the host community become very conscious about their welfare. Park officials should not only be much conscious about the resources that will accrue from the venture but also they should be more conscious about the host population since the success of the ecotourism venture largely depends on them. Also the problem with the clash of two cultures can be minimized or stopped when rules are to abide by them. This will, in a way, marry the two cultures together in a friendlier manner.

Negative impacts of ecotourism

Behavioural Impacts

According to Abotchie, (1995), one type of tourism impact on residents is the 'demonstration effect' of residents copying behavioural traits of the tourists. The host population, in one-way or the other, imitates the visitors. This at times adulterates their rich culture. The effect of this is largely seen on the younger members in the community who end up imitating the tourist' ambitions and values. Many of these youngsters migrate to the visitors' countries with the aim of becoming as wealthy as the tourists. Some youngsters, with the idea of imitating the tourists, end up becoming drug addicts and criminals (Kotse, 1987). This negative impact has made host communities suffer a crime wave. Two of such host communities are Costa del Sol and Costa Brava, in Spain. According to Davidson, (1993) "crimes are made easier by the presence of so many tourists which increases the chances of criminals escaping undetected through the crowds".

Imitating tourists always have both negative as well as positive implications on the hosting tourists. However, they refuse to accept the fact that some communities' lifestyles are changed for the better through ecotourism. It is not a crime for host communities to imitate or learn and practice what they think is good from the tourists. Abotchie's survey indicates' that some residents admire and would like to adopt some aspects of tourists' traits. According to his survey a majority of respondents identified these traits as: sociability, simplicity of dressing, objectivity, punctuality, humility, inquisitiveness, and confidence. It has also been suggested that cultural selectivity should be adopted as it has been in other places (NTDP, 1996-2010). Culture is said to be dynamic, and therefore, efforts to inculcate good practices from the visitors or tourists should be encouraged. In Ghana most of our tourists are from the developed countries in Europe, America and others. It will even be an opportunity for some of the youth to migrate to these countries through ecotourism venture, receive some kind of education on cleanliness and other ways, to help safeguard the environment.

Adulteration of Culture

The unfamiliar culture of the host population attracts tourist into the destination. The characteristics of culture play an important role in determining impacts. However, with the presence of many tourists, the result may be either a destruction of local culture, or more likely, the commercialization of cultural

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features and tradition such as dance, costumes and art and crafts (Cooper et al 1993).

The type of tourists' activity can have a negative impact on the lives of host communities. Certain activities like gambling pose strong risks to the host communities in terms of exposure to prostitution, drug and crime, (Cooper et al 1993). The rich culture of a host community can be adulterated since it attracts tourist and later be commercialized as mused by Wall, (1993). A host population's culture, when it becomes not only something for the host population itself, but also a form of tourists attraction, can undergo some extreme changes; when this happens tourism might destroy cultural authenticity, (Donald Getz, 1982).

The host population's rich culture, for example, festivals, might lose its authenticity owing to it being commercialized. But true festivals are produced explicitly for public not private consumption. It is something that has value in the community. But gradually tourism destroys the very thing which attracted tourists into the community.

It is an undisputed fact that tourism helps to preserve the culture of the host population, the harmful effects are always on ascendancy. As commented earlier, the culture of the host population can be adulterated owing to its commercialization. In addition, the rich culture can be trivialized and thus becomes unimportant to the tourists. It therefore loses its quality or values. "Everyday life, history and religion of host populations are used as material for

tourists' entertainment, which gives little real insight into the lives of the tourists" (Goodwill, 1998).

Carved masks, which are worn on occasions, are showcased in miniatures. These are sold as souvenirs to tourists. Carvers for the purpose of making money do not work to bring the quality out of them, since tourists do not understand the symbolic significance of the details on the masks or the work. Eventually "the artist's level of producing the artifact is lost" (Davidson, 1993).

Impact on Wildlife

Tourists cannot forgo the viewing and photographing of wildlife since it is significant to them. A problem arises when patronage of tourists to a national park exceeds its carrying capacity. Some species of wildlife could withstand the influx of tourists but others cannot. This forces wildlife into the deep forest owing to the various kinds of commotion created by tourists. Minibus drives are sometimes encouraged to break rules and chase animals (Mathieson and Wall, 1993), causing numerous animals to die of heart failure. Handling of young creatures by tourists also results in increase in infant mortality. Moreover, the construction of roads through parks, which were traditionally feeding and breeding areas for wildlife, makes them relocate.

In addition, the excessive hunting and killing of animals for trading purpose has increased the growing demand for wildlife souvenirs especially in East Africa where this market is booming. Many shops "were stuffed with elephant tusks, zebra hides, mounted antelope heads, lion chain necklaces, monkey-skin throw rugs, ostrich-foot lamps, gazelle-hoof key rings and assorted

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other animals products eagerly snapped up by wealthy tourists", Mathieson and Wall, 1993). However, national parks and reserves would be conducive to the proliferation of certain species, thereby stimulating fighting among animals.

According to Mathieson and Wall, "game parks have become the elephants' only refuge". However, the parks are too small to support the increase in elephant numbers. Their excessive numbers have seen to be a problem owing to the stripping and uprooting of trees. They destroy the environment on which they feed. This has reduced the food supply for other species like the giraffes and the black rhinoceros.

These problems will continue to exist. But to ensure a total preservation of the parks and reserves, the industry has to meet the needs of the local population by providing land, food, and work for the growing population, (Mathieson and Wall 1993).

Ecotourism and Social Conflicts

Places where attractions are located are places owned by the host population. Nevertheless, respective landowners end up losing their property handed over to them by their ancestors. The community where an attraction is located normally depends on the land for survival. An example is where the rural folks go for hunting, firewood, set traps, farm and at the same time sell some of their timber for both economic and medicinal purposes. The introduction of new laws on their own land creates a situation where their daily bread becomes a problem. An example which can readily be cited is the case of

the Massai of East Africa; they "were effectively ignored and kept outside political spheres" (Western, 1997) because of the banning of hunting expeditions in the wildlife reserves, their own property inherited from their forefathers.

The Massai owns about 70 percent of the reserves in Kenya. But because of their illiteracy they "were forced into a sustainable ecology, with construction of fences and overgrazing, potential for wildlife is reduced" (Carrere, 1994). "The carrying capacity of the land is reduced for them and their livestock, and wildlife simultaneously; the effect is often substantially worse" (Spence 1996). They were restricted from grazing on their own parcel of rangelands and therefore cannot be pastorals (Berger 1993). Hence the younger Massai move to Nairobi, (the capital of Kenya) finding employment in low level jobs, particularly as night watchmen. Others have no option than to be in the tourists' trade, selling curios, selling themselves for photographs and taking advantage of what services have been provisioned by park money (Berger 1993).

In spite of being marginalized, some authorities continue to blame the Massai for overstocking in a typical "Tragedy of the commons" (Spence 1996). The preservation of natural places to increase the flow of the tourists into the region had forced them (Massai) to changes as culture, losing too much of their rich lands to return to nomadic pastoralism. With increase in population and cattle rotation system, they now heavily affect the land they occupy and are not compatible within protected areas. They were robbed of large grazing lands and have not been considered or given any substantial income or compensated for

their loss of land. In terms of employment, they are considered "outcasts" since employment favours better-educated workers from other parts of the country (Lamphrey and Walter, 1994). Tourism has not brought any tangible benefits to the Massai people. However, corrupt Management Committee Members register non-residents, and possess large portions of land for themselves after they had collected huge sums of monies from non-residents. These bad attitudes by some officials create land disputes, which later become a major problem in some cases lives and properties are lost.

Ecotourism, with its central aim of protecting the environment and the well-being of the local people, in this way, becomes questionable in that the support to local communities by means of jobs and income (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996) becomes meaningless, especially, in the case of the Massai, because ecotourism has "punished them onto marginal lands with harsh climatic conditions, poor soils, lack of water resources, and infected with human and livestock diseases, making survival impossible" (Kamuaro, 2002).

Having been victims of this, "undeserved punishment" the Massai from Loita Hills, some 320 km southwest of Nairobi, have been fighting a fierce battle to prevent an indigenous forest, traditionally known as Naimina-Enkiyio or Forest of the Lost Child, from being turned into another ecotourism destination (Carrere 1999).

When one analyses the issue under discussion it can be known that this problem was the result of lack of technical expertise on the part of the planning authorities. It is important that the host community be involved in the planning

of the ecotourism business so as to minimize such conflicts if not halt it. In a successful ecotourism business, all stakeholders must be part of the decision-making process as well as the implementation of the venture. The views of landowners are very crucial and should be respected in order to ensure continuous peace in ecotourism communities.

Collision between Humans and Wildlife

Another conflict is created when wildlife exceeds its carrying capacity in a reserve. Because of wildlife overcrowding in some reserves, some could be seen beyond their confines, even into homes (destination) around the reserve.

Anthony Brandt (2000) observed that, "When the number of wildlife increases in a reserve it is not the environment that suffers but various diseases are created out of this". The deer, according to him carry about 300 deer ticks only on its ear not to mention those on its body. Deer ticks – *Ixodes Scarpulasis* carry a *spirochete* called *Borealis burgdorferi* which cause Lyme disease. The symptoms include nausea, fever, night sweats, and arthritis-like pain in the joints; if not treated early, with heavy doses of antibiotics, it can cause damage to the nervous system (Brandt 2000).

Some wildlife can cause financial losses to the host community, especially members who farm around the reserve or parks while others can go into residents' backyard and cause damage to their ornamental plants. For example, in New York State, tab for beaver runs into $6 million annually, and about 1 million car-deer collision in the United States of America every year,

causing some $1.1 billion in damage and more than 200 human facilities (Allen, 2000).

Owing to laws restricting hunting or poaching of wildlife, especially in a reserve, there is the possibility that the host population, faced with the above menace, could be "pushed out". The host population can no more live with wildlife, especially the dangerous ones, in their community since they (wildlife) cannot be controlled. However, the host population could live with the situation when wildlife population is not exceedingly large.

Los Angeles and some California cities (close to reserves) have suffered because of overcrowding of wildlife. In 1995, a lion wandered into a shopping center in Montclair, a suburb of Los Angeles; another killed two dogs in La Crescenta; another child was attacked in this same suburb (Brandt, 2000).

Ecotourism and conservation cannot be segregated since the two are almost directed towards one main goal, preservation. The two aim at protecting the natural environment and wildlife (Saigo 1981). However, they become meaningless when their respective objectives are not met but rather tend to break some of its laws by allowing people into a reserve to hunt wildlife with the aim of reducing their number.

"The ultimate survivor", an article by Mike Finkel, stated that in a move to reduce wildlife in parks of America, "cash prizes worth $200 (in 1998) were given to anyone who killed most wildlife; in 1996, wildlife services agents killed a total of 82,261 Coyotes" (Finkel, 2000).

Ecotourism, "respecting the integrity of the host community" (Scarce et al 1992), and "safeguarding the environment and wildlife" in this way "remains a destructive force for natural areas, often in combination with detrimental socio-economic effects for the communities within which it operated" (Hunter and Green 1995; Liddle, 1997).

In the case of SKCD, the area is not blessed with such wildlife which will create some of the problems discussed above; therefore, developers and the surrounding communities will be free from all harmful impacts of wildlife attacks at the preliminary stages of ecotourism development, although one cannot tell what the future holds. On the other hand, some of the animals could be transported (Wildlife Transport) to other forests where the number is less. This practice can also boost ecotourism in that conservation.

In the Atewa forest are grasscutters, antelopes and duikers, among others, but it is believed that the number is not large. This might be that the laws governing the forest are not being enforced, hence the continuous hunting activities in the forest.

Destination's image and ecotourism

Ecotourism, an alternative to mass tourism, depends on several factors in order to attract visitors into a particular destination. For this reason, there is the need to promote the variant attractions in a destination by advertising the tourist products to the outside world. In promoting a destination, image, the composite

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'mental picture' developed by potential visitors, is an influential factor in their purchase decision (Lumsdon et al 2001).

Middleton (1994), found image to be one of the five components in the overall tourism product, a vital element within the augmented product. In furtherance, he argued that image is an essential objective of destination marketing to sustain, alter, or develop images in order to influence prospective buyers' expectation. But whether a destination should have a positive image or a negative one is another issue to be discussed.

The image of a destination is an integral influence in the formation of attitude, which in turn, can be decisive in consumer purchase decision. Therefore, what a visitor expects to find should be clearly indicated, visible and detailed by the image-maker in an attractive form. Houghton, (1990) found that among a myriad of information services, the print media was the most influential. The image of a destination makes it possible either to attract or lose visitors. Since image exerts a powerful influence on consumer decision to purchase, information given to visitors must be accurate since biased information can change a visitor's perception of a destination.

Moreover, consumers are likely to secure more sensitive information relating to their prospective holiday destination and increase their overall information input, which enables them to reduce the degree of risk involved in the final purchase decision (Lumsdon et al 2001).

Crompton (1979) defines image as the sum of beliefs, impressions, ideas and perceptions that people hold of objects, behaviours and events while

(Boulding 1956), refers to image as the feelings we have of anything that is cognizant.

By the above definitions, it is known that visitors (tourists) would prefer a place depending on how they judge and perceive the destination, the attractions, the lifestyle of the host population (attitude to visitors) and finally, the political stability of the host country. In support of the above, Heywood (1990) revealed that tourists expect a destination to be safe and clean, and they want to feel welcome and at ease. Clean, safe and friendly communities exist only if the local citizens care about their communities, if the communities demonstrate care for its citizens.

Tourists and visitors alike would consider destinations with positive images since a negative image could change visitors' perception of a place. It is imperative for a country determined to be recognized as a famous tourists' destination, to be circumspect about a strong positive image. In this respect, those factors connected with personal safety and peace should be of paramount importance. Other reasons like moral outrage endangered by human rights abuses and corruption, violence and kidnapping, must not be part of the host population.

Visitor safety is a prime factor of a destination's positive image. This is because most visitors wish to avoid exposure to any form of inconvenience that may interrupt their planned period of enjoyment and relaxation (Lunisdon et al 2001). A destination must therefore be mindful of petty crimes such as theft from persons which is likely to affect the visitors, especially visitors from

developed countries. The destinations of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have suffered greatly over the past decade owing to the increasing levels of violence and crime.

In December 1992, Rio de Janeiro had to take the unusual step of forming a 'Trust Police Force'. About 475 officers were employed to patrol the city and beaches in an attempt to minimize the level of violent crimes against tourists (Lumsdon et al 2001). Although the incident was reported to have subsided, "The Economist" argued that the decline of tourists in the city was a result of street influx violence. The paper included that hotel occupancy rates reached an all-time low of 60 percent in the period December 1993 to March 1994 (The Economist, 1995).

On the other hand, a destination known for its positive image can sometimes be a problem. An example is Costa Rica, which is considered to be one of the safest destinations in Latin America. Eventually, it began to have negative effects owing to the relatively high level of visitors into the destinations, thereby increasing tourism-related crime-petty especially in the capital, San Jose. The changing situation at the destinations forced the Institute Costarricence de Turismo (the Costa Rican Tourists Institute) to issue visitors with what it called a security passport, which spelt out eight simple guidelines for personal security (Lumsdon et al 2001).

Warring against country also tends to have a significant negative image on the host population. When this occurs, tourism is strongly affected with many tourists canceling planned visits altogether or taking their planned holidays at

another destination. Lumsdon et al (2001) revealed that as fighting broke out in January 1996 between Ecuador and Peru in the Amazonas region, it had a severe effect on Ecuador's ecotourism offering, losing many ecotourists to either Costa Rica, or, ironically, to the major Peruvian ecotourism areas away from military activity.

In Columbia, the problem of guerilla activity and drug-related violence is a great menace to tourism in the country. In February 1990, guerrillas from the M-19 group seized control of the Embassy of the Dominican Republic in Bogotá, holding over 20 diplomats from various countries hostage; drug barons assassinated the Colombian Justice Minister, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, in April 1994 (Lumsdon et al 2001).

Natural disaster is another issue to be considered since it also reinforces a negative image on a destination. Earthquakes, storms and fire are very dangerous and create negative image of a destination. In 1995, an earthquake hit the city of Mexico, killing about 10,000 people; many shantytowns in and around Mexico were also destroyed. In the Columbian town of Amero, volcanic activity in November 1995 killed some 25000 people (Crawford 1991).

"The Economist" (1998) reported that Columbia floods were estimated to have caused US $3 billion worth of damage, whilst the draught in Central America was thought to have cost Guatemala around 10 percent of its grain harvest, and Costa Rica, 30 percent of her coffee harvest whilst in the Galapagos Islands, an extensive environmental damage was recorded when fire swept

through the island in 1994. Later, all tourist flights to the island were suspended, with obvious loss of revenue (Lawrence 1994).

Furthermore, the issues of diseases and dangerous animals or insects needs to be considered; diseases, present by far the greatest danger, directly to the tourists and the Medical Services of both host and market nations.

Lumsdon et al (2001) stated that contracting diseases, especially reported cases, is on the increase owing to the rising number of tourists from the developed countries visiting the developing nations. This is because whenever the carrying capacity of the host population is exceeded number of problems like polluting the environment becomes unavoidable. The host community or the destination becomes a breeding place for various diseases (See Table 3).

Table 3.

Malaria cases recorded in Latin America in 1995.

Country	Reported cases in millions
Nicaragua	1525.6
Honduras	1022.1
Peru	804.5
Bolivia	617.8
Brazil	350.2
Guatemala	236.0
Ecuador	155.0
Columbia	126.4

Table 3 *continued*: Malaria cases reported in Latin America.

Country	Reported cases in millions
Venezuela	73.4
El Savador	58.1
Panama	27.3
Paraguay	18.1
Mexico	7.9
Argentina	3.0

Source: Lumsdon et al, 2001

Finally, in promoting destinations the issue of image is of much importance and must therefore be taken into consideration. This is because image is the influencer of customer attitude. The perception a visitor has about a destination may definitely influence his ability to either take the trip or change his mind toward another destination. It is therefore important for place promoters to bear in mind when they are seeking to develop the image of a destination (Lumsdon et al 2001).

Ghana has a good image at the international level. This, among others, has contributed to the influx of tourists into the sub-region. The problem of uncontrolled crime and other immoral activities at some destinations, according to the above authors mar the success of the ecotourism venture. This can be attributed to many tourists visiting a small community. This can always become an existing problem when officials tend to look only at the income they will

generate from the venture. They deliberately refuse to check the carrying capacity being exceeded. Such bad habits must not be entertained. Tourists and host communities should be educated on negative environmental practices which will degrade the environment. Waste bins should also be placed at vantage points to check pollution. This will help in the fight against the spread of diseases in ecotourism communities.

Positive impacts of ecotourism

Impact on Economy

The tourism sector is being developed in many regions all over the world owing to the potential it has to bring great wealth to destinations, especially the developing world. For the above reason, a community with potential attractions needs to promote its resources to the outside world. Communities rich in heritage of attractions such as temples, Stale homes, areas of outstanding natural beauty or long sandy beaches, must spend money to cater for their visitors once they have arrived (Arndel, 1989). The provision of accommodation and food services should be available, not forgetting accessibility. The destinations, for this purpose, have to release funds from their own coffers for the development of the attractions.

Another issue of much concern is the ability of a destination to advertise and promote itself to the foreign visitors. An example is Iota. The Iota Tourist Board mounts advertising campaigns in the media of certain countries in the developed world to persuade the residents of the countries to travel to Iota for

holidays (Davidson 1993). A destination must have good tourism infrastructure, a potential to attract tourists.

Moreover, a destination needs to educate and train the staff for the sector. In reality, such people need to be properly educated for effective work. The host populations, for this purpose, do so in the form of contribution, donation and taxes among others.

Investing in tourism generates a lot of economic benefits to the host population or the destination in question. Some members of the host population could be employed directly or indirectly. In the direct employment, members received adequate training and education which, in the end equip them with employable skills and empower members to be employed whereas the direct form takes the form of selling local items like artifacts and local food among others, for a living.

The system of importing and exporting goods termed international trade is another form of impact on the economy. According to Goodwin, (1998), there are two forms of exports, namely, visible and invisible. With the visible, physical goods are seen, touched, and weighed, as they pass through a country to another. The invisible ones which are not physical goods but services, are provided by one country to another. These, he said, include banking services or fees paid by overseas clients to architects, lawyers or accountants, in return for their advice or expertise.

Tourism is also regarded as an invisible export for the potential foreign exchange earning it brings to a country. Services provided in hotels and

restaurants among others, help destinations as well as the country in which the venture is based. The valuable foreign exchange earnings remain one of the main reasons why destinations choose to develop that lucrative sector (Davidson 1993).

Enhancement of cultural exchange

Ecotourism is one of the effective means to communicate between two or more cultures at a given time. The belief that the sector helps to bridge gaps and also create understanding and good relationship among nations is often held up as one of the positive effects of ecotourism. Staying with the host population enables the visitors achieve greater understanding of the host and vice versa. It is also true that many people's attitudes are changed as they travel to other countries. By this theory, tourism becomes a kind of educational process, and may be given the credit for such achievements as helping to maintain peace, inspiring oppressed people to change their political regimes, and improving the situation of women in primitive societies (Davidson, 1993).

Preservation/restoration of ancient monuments

The contribution of ecotourism towards the preservation and conservation of our environment cannot be overlooked. Examples are the creation of parks and wildlife parks as Yellowstone Park (USA), the Amboseli National Park and the Maasai Mara National Reserve (Kenya) (Cooper et al, 1998). In Ghana, game parks like the Mole National Park, Kakum National

Park, Boabeng Fiema Monkeys sanctuary and the Boti Water Falls, not forgetting the Cape Coast Castle, among others, are being guided by the good concept of ecotourism.

In Ghana, the method adopted by most farmers for farming known as shifting cultivation, which has the potential of depleting vast acres of forests has not been so helpful. The system has rendered places where potential attractions are located unattractive. These bad practices can be addressed when such attractions are developed to aid respective communities in their developmental agendas.

Ecotourism, inroad for Developing Countries

Ecotourism, especially in most developing countries, has comparative advantage in terms of its unique and outstanding attractions. The natural beauty of the attraction provides unique experience of natural environment, which contrasts with their (foreign tourists) home latitudes. Most developing nations with such spectacular attractions have bright future and would continue to receive "increasing number of ecotourists" (Elert 1994).

The fact that most developing countries are poverty ridden cannot be denied. Nevertheless, capitalizing on ecotourism is a great opportunity for host communities, in terms of material, such as income and assets, social benefits-education, literacy, availability, access, and quality, self-esteem, political power and sense of efficiency (Aidoo-Taylor 2001).

Ecotourism, which is an alternative form of mass tourism, focuses mostly on two things: the natural attractions and the host population. It sees to it that the natural attraction receives the maximum protection and at the same time provides resources for the host community. But the question is, how can developing countries, considered as "poverty ridden", develop their potential attractions for their own benefit?

In an attempt to answer the above question, one should understand that the venture "locally owned" (Elert 1994) has some advantages for developing countries. In the first place, the facilities in terms of infrastructure as superstructure are simpler and less expensive as compared with that of mass tourism and can therefore be managed by the local people themselves. Secondly, since foreign-based entrepreneurs do not operate it but about 70 percent of the workers come from the home country, the venture can reduce the problem of unemployment in the community as well as in the region in which the attraction is based. An example of one such destination which has made profits from tourism remaining in its community is the island of Beta. In an attempt to minimize leakages, tourists were encouraged to stay in village communities, in houses built using traditional methods and materials. Visitors eat the same ethnic dishes of the island and the local population is fully involved in the venture including the local craft (Hall, 1993).

According to Witt and Montinho (1989) an increasing desire to relate to nature, to gain first-hand experience, and to engage in active pastime (e.g. hobby, holidays, farm tourism); and the higher levels of environmental

consciousness and sensitivity to the quality of life in general, as well as people's eagerness to learn foreign culture makes the future of ecotourism bright. Nevertheless, these valuable resources in most developing countries are yet to receive the necessary attention.

Seeing the benefits ecotourism could bring to developing nations, the practice of sustainable tourism, which is the key aim of ecotourism, is therefore important. With sustainable tourism, the environment is always preserved for this generation and that of the future.

Many developing countries are known for their splendid traditional arts and crafts. For example, Ghana is famous for her excellence in woodcarvings, and the Bambara tribe of Mali for their competence in mask productions. However, these works of art are dying out gradually. Tourism is helping to preserve our rich traditional arts and culture as well as craft from being lost all together (Kotse, 1987).

In Ghana, many of the host populations earn a living by the production of art works (handicraft). A famous example is the village of Ahwiaa, which is popular for the production of quality handicrafts, and Bonwire for its remarkable Kente weaving. These villages in the Ashanti Region of Ghana always attract numerous tourists who purchase their works as souvenirs for their loved ones. These works reflect the traditional lives of the Ashantis. But for tourism and tourists, the arts and rich culture of the people would have died forever. Ecotourism has boomed their businesses to their peak, reducing the unemployment problem in the communities, especially among the youth.

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In Ghana, the development of ecotourism is being realized as the means by which the country's economic problems could be addressed. This was made known in the "Daily Graphic" which revealed that fourteen (14) communities in the country had benefited from ecotourism ("Daily Graphic", Thursday, February 19, 2004).

Community Willingness of Participation.

Participation can be defined depending upon the context and the background in which the word is applied.

Cohen and Uphoff (1997) define participation as the involvement of people in decision-making process, in implementing programmes, their sharing in benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes.

In another context, Paul (1987) considers participation to be an active process by which beneficiary groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance, or other values they cherish.

By the definition of Cohen et al, the community integration in the whole set-up is very important, especially in the decision-making process. In discussing issues concerning the implementation and development of ecotourism in the community, how the community should benefit, how the venture will be able to solve problems like unemployment and, more importantly, landowners' compensation need to be addressed. This will make the host community accept

and support the venture, thus reducing any possible resentment. In this case there is the need to train some community residents directly to work at craft/souvenir shops and others as tour guides.

In addition to the above, community residents should be assigned some responsibilities like voluntarily organizing themselves for clean-up exercises and cooperating with public authorities in maintaining conservation or historic and nature sites in and near the community (Mathieson and Wall, 1993). The less privileged (those perceived to be too poor) must not be discouraged from participating in ecotourism enterprise development (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001).

Murphy (1980), in his opinion, noted that the willingness of the residents to participate and their ability to develop rational and practical options is very important in the ecotourism business.

According to Green and Hunter (1995), tourism planning need not remain the realm of the experts alone; given the chance, the public (community) can make a useful input into the decision-making process since the local people are expert in their own areas and have much to offer in the understanding of local situations and activities.

Furthermore, local participation empowers and gives the locals the sense of responsibility and pride over their own resources and control over their own community development as a result of the direct and the indirect benefit they derive. This enables effective planning and implementation of whatever policy intended for the locality (Whelan, 1991).

Landownership and Ecotourism

Land is the most significant aspect of ecotourism. It cannot be neglected for any successful tourism business. In ecotourism, the attraction of the destination and the tourists' product rest on the land. There is the need therefore to address the issue of landownership between the respective landowners and developers in every ecotourism community or the host community, for peace and total understanding, before and after the development of the attractions.

The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (2000) defines 'landowner' as a person who owns land, especially a large amount of land. In Ghana, groups are headed by village heads, chiefs and kings and they are the owners of the land (Dei 2000).

There are three types of community land in Ghana: land owned absolutely by a group of people or individuals; clan or family land, and "stool" or "skin" land (Dei 2000). He explained that the concept of "stool" land is peculiar to southern Ghana and "skin" to the north of Ghana. The acquisition of land for ecotourism depends on the type of landowners; either by group of individuals, groups, clan, and the policy therein.

In Africa, many communities (landowners) are deprived of their rights to their own property inherited from their ancestors. For a successful tourism, development of the attractions must be compatible with the host population's environment, society and culture. It is therefore imperative for developers to find out the rightful owners of the attraction(s), negotiate with them in terms of benefits or compensations. For this reason landowners as well as the key

members in the local community must be involved in the decision-making process and the implementation of the whole setup. Tourism in communities should not be in the form of imposition. It must not be "top-down". Local communities must be treated as 'resources' and must benefit from the proceeds of such resources (Dei 2000). Ironically, a general perception is that landowners play a limited role, apart from signing away their land for large-scale forestry or ecotourism development (Ahai 2000).

Landowners must be portrayed as major stakeholders in the ecotourism venture. For this purpose, there should be laid down policies governing the whole business. There should be equity shares, which are mechanisms for getting the benefits for local people. Local communities (landowners) need to appreciate the benefits and demerits of tourism. By granting local communities rights over land they are enable to secure income from tourism developments on their land (Mokumbi et al, 2001).

The development of attractions for ecotourism has been a cause of disagreement in many communities on the African continent. Parts of the communities around the Kakum National Park in Ghana are good examples.

Dei (2000) remarked that before the creation of the park in 1989, the area covered by the park played a very remarkable role in the lives of the people. The forest served as hunting grounds for grasscutters, duikers, antelopes and several other animals. It also provided raw materials in the form of canes, wood, and hides for local craftsmen. After the creation of the park, the people see the park

as an encroachment on their farmlands, and they are embittered about their nonparticipation in the running of the park.

An attempt to integrate landowners/communities into the venture saw the post apartheid era government in South Africa addressing land issues through the following ways:

(a) A land restitution programme, which will honour claims of communities dispossessed of their lands without reasonable compensation during the creation of black "homelands".

(b) A labour tenants bill, which will protect security of tenure for black farmers on white lands.

(c) A tenure reform, which will deal primarily but not exclusively with tenure in the communal areas (Atwood et al 1997).

CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe has been innovative in the role given to communities and partnership between communities and government in managing natural resources. Botswana, among other countries in the region, is experimenting with resource contracts between communities and private sector, coupling money from ecotourism in exchange for camping, hunting, and visiting rights (Ahai, 2000).

Constraints to the Promotion and Development of Ecotourism

Most developing countries have potential natural attractions. But owing to the economic instability in these countries these resources are left to

chance. In Africa, a majority of ecotourism destinations are located in rural areas where access to the place is a problem. This affects the type of clientele especially where infrastructure such as road, electricity, health facility, water and telephone are poorly served (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001).

Yankah and Ache (2000) argues that the following constraints need to be overcome if tourism in sub-Saharan Africa is to be developed to its peak:

(i)   The need to improve the infrastructure of tourism-transportation access, water supply, waste management and telecommunications – in many existing tourism areas, and open up new tourism areas, in conjunction with the development of tourism attractions, activities, facilities and services.

(ii)   The need to improve the environmental quality of existing and potential tourism areas for the benefit of both residents and tourists.

(iii)   The image of Sub-Saharan Africa and the attractions it has to offer is rather weak and often negative, with much international publicity of ethnic conflicts and wars, high crime rates, health problems, poverty and ineffectual and corrupt governments in some areas. Political instability is a real constraint on developing tourism in some areas.

(iv)   The financial resources for public and private investment in tourism development are limited in most areas, and it is often difficult to attract the necessary investment in tourism because of concern by investors about the risk factors involved.

In Ghana, there is inadequacy of infrastructure and receptive facilities for visitors especially in the rural areas. This eventually mars the influx of tourists to such destinations. The need for interpretative signal, maps, and written guides on animals, trees and birds is deemed a necessary aid to maximize the tourist experience (NCRC 1998).

In addition to the above is the destruction of flora and fauna by vehicular crushing of vegetation. Hunter and Green (1995) argued that vegetation cover might be lost or damaged through trampling by walkers or crushing by tourists' vehicles, which eventually lead to soil compaction and this increases surface water run-off, soil erosion and a decline in species diversity.

Conceptual Framework

Like most African countries, efforts to develop a viable tourism industry in Ghana are enshrined in the nation's 15-year Tourism Development Plan for the period 1996-2010. The Ministry of Tourism was therefore established in 1993 to underscore the government's commitment to tourism development in the country (NTDP, 1996). It is in light of this that the government was to develop all potential tourism attractions in the country to diversify the economy. This aim has been one of the major concerns in the Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District Assembly's 3 – year Development Plan. It is hoped that by 2005, the district should develop three of her natural attractions to accelerate the development of the district. (See Fig. 3).

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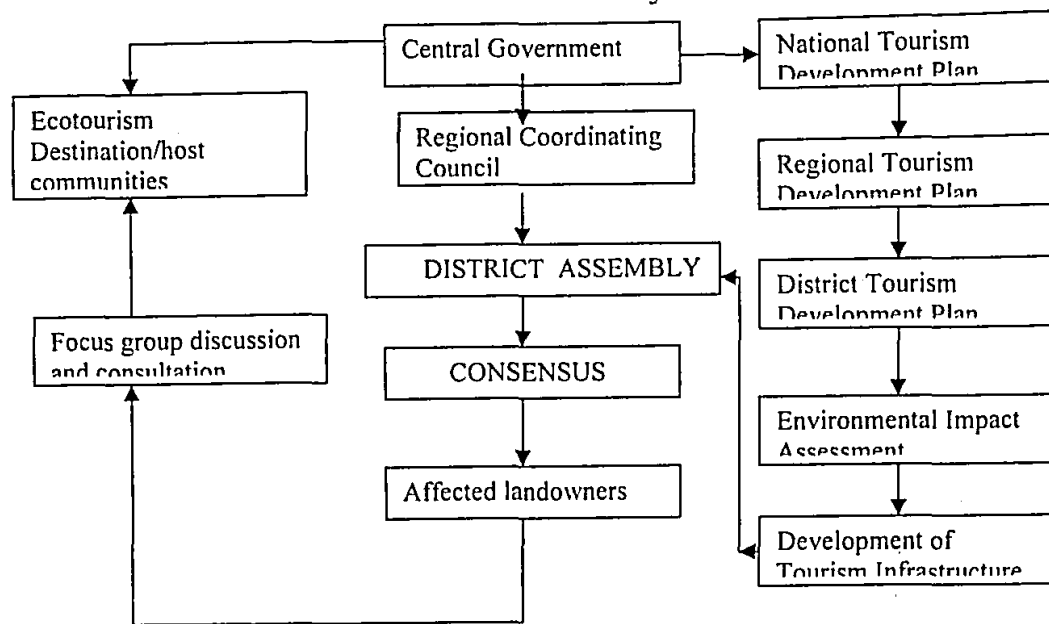
Fig 3: Modified Consensus Model of Ecotourism Planning with Communities

Source: Adapted from Dei, (2001).

Above is a consensus model of planning ecotourism with communities, the model traces how an attraction could be developed from the national level down to the district level with the respective communities. The approach is holistic since the communities are involved in the decision-making process as well as the implementation of the project. In the decision making process, community leaders including traditional and religious leaders should be invited to attend meetings on preparation and review of tourism development plans that affect their areas. They are encouraged to express their views on appropriate patterns of development and how residents can benefit from Ecotourism.

However, consensus must be reached with the host communities and affected landowners before development of the attraction. Adding to these is the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which is required for all new developments project, and programmes that have the potential to cause significant environment impacts.
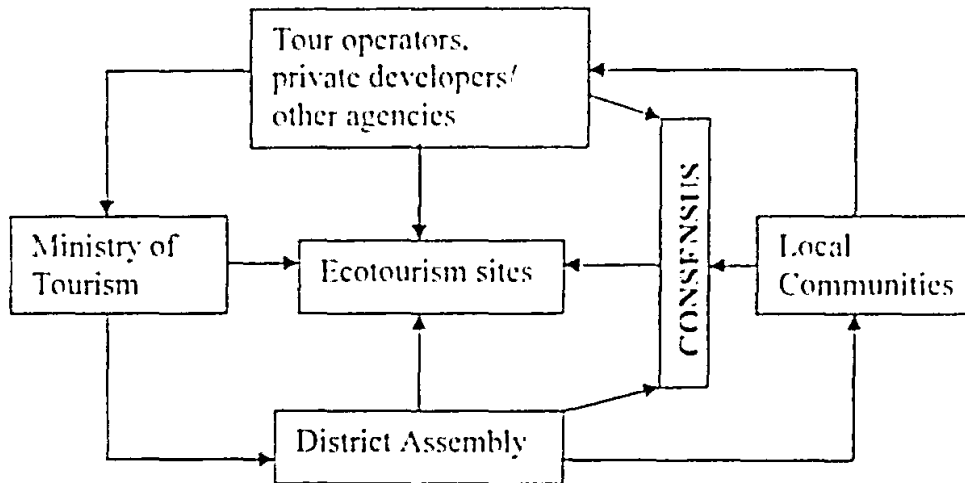
Fig. 4: A modified consensus model of planning Ecotourism development at the district level

Source: Author's construct, 2004

The above is proposed as helping to explain the development of ecotourism venture with communities as well as other stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, the ecotourism venture should always involve the communities (who are the rightful owners of the attraction) in the decision-making process. They must be willing to participate in the ecotourism venture.

The ecotourism development with communities' model is based on the Ecotourism Planning with communities' consensus model adapted from Dei, 2001 which traces how an attraction could be developed from the national level down to the communities. The proposed model limits itself only to the district.

The proposed model is made of six stakeholders: The Ministry of Tourism, Tour operators, Local communities, The District Assembly, Ecotourism sites as well as consensus. It looks at how to develop an attraction at the district level. As commented earlier, the idea to develop potential attractions in each district is enshrined in the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP, 1996). The district assembly, in her effort to develop her potential attractions, need to consult the target groups (Avornyo, 2002). It is always imperative that the district assembly reach consensus with all target groups involved, especially the local communities before the development of the attractions for a successful and a conflict-free ecotourism business.

Conclusion

The chapter has thoroughly discussed the importance of tourism to a developing country. Both negative and positive impacts of tourism have been discussed as well as the benefits for developing ecotourism. The chapter further looked at how positive image of a destination can increase the influx of tourists while negative image can also mar the success of an ecotourism venture.

Land acquisition has been noticed as one of the causes of social conflicts in some ecotourism destinations. Given the Massai of East Africa, the chapter stressed how they have been marginalized owing to 'illiteracy'.

Finally, there is the Consensus Model of Developing Ecotourism with communities, a modified model from Dei, which is vividly explained. The model argues that it is always necessary to include traditional leaders as well as opinion leaders in a destination during the decision-making and the implementation period for a successful and a conflict-free ecotourism venture.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

This chapter gives thorough explanation of how data collected for the study were analyzed. The chapter includes the research design, where data were collected for the study, sampling procedure, and the target population. It also covers the various instruments used for the collection of data for the study, among others.

Research Design

The qualitative design was adopted for the study since the research was determined to seek the different perceptions and opinions people have towards ecotourism, its establishment and development. The qualitative design was found useful because it helped to obtain intricate details about phenomena, feelings, thought and emotions. Moreover, this research design was chosen for its notion of subjectivity, which allows personal expressions and individuality (Sarantakos, 1997). Also, it easily accommodates small samples and facilitates information gathering from each respondent (Yigrilaa, 2001).

Sources of data and data collection

Primary and secondary sources of data were collected for the study. Primary data were collected mainly via the use of in-depth interviews and questionnaires from purposively selected respondents from the Suhum Kraboah Coaltar District. The respondents include traditional leaders, elders, and assemblymen from selected communities, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) branch in the district, Centre for National Culture (in the district), as well as the District Assembly. Secondary data were also collected from the SKCDA's Three Year Medium Term Plan (2002-2004). Additional information on the study was obtained from both published and unpublished literature from the library, magazines and the internet.

Target population

Due to the qualitative approach adopted for the study, key informants such as opinion leaders and heads of selected institutions were purposively selected for in-depth interview. This was found necessary since it is believed they are the mouthpieces in their communities.

Sampling procedure

The study adopted the non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used to select opinion leaders from five potential ecotourism communities after a reconnaissance survey. The communities are Abommofodensua, Anum-Apapam, Obuoho, Obuotumpan, and Obuodaka. The

respondents selected from these communities included traditional leaders or rulers and assemblymen. In the District Assembly, the District Chief Executive and the Coordinating Director were selected. In addition some workers of the Forestry Department and the Centre for National Culture (CNC) were also selected. The following table shows the breakdown of the selection made.

Table 4:

Selection of opinion leaders from the ecotourism communities

Ecotourism communities	Number of opinion leaders
Abommofodensua	6
Anum-Apapam	6
Obuohu	7
Obuotumpan	6
Obuodaka	7
Total	32

Source: Fieldsurvey, 2004

Table 5:

Selection of Key Informants

Government employees	Number of Key Informants.
District chief executive	1
District director	1
District forestry dept.	4

Table 5 *continued*: Selection of Key Informants

CNC	2
Total	8

Source: Fieldsurvey, 2004   Total number of respondents selected, 40

In each community a total of 5 traditional leaders and all the respective landowners and some elders were selected, making a total of 32 respondents. The others selected from the district assembly were the chief executive and the coordinating director making a total number of two, and some from the forestry department. The other respondents were workers of the Centre for National Culture (CNC).

Data collection tools

Data collected from respondents for the study comprised an interview guide. The interview guide was used to elicit the necessary information from respondents based on the questions raised. A qualitative research should be able to know respondents' views, opinions or feelings they may have towards a particular phenomenon. For this reason the use of in-depth interview was found significant.

The interview guide for the selected respondents was designed into sections. These included tourism awareness, willingness to participate in the ecotourism venture, and benefits of ecotourism, landownership and attitude. The

rest were constraints to ecotourism development, constraints and conflicts as well as respondents demographic information.

Every segment of the interview guide played a significant role for the purpose set. Questions on tourism awareness, for example, quizzed respondents' understanding and knowledge about tourism and other attractions in their area or somewhere in the district. On the willingness to participate in ecotourism, respondents were asked whether they thought their communities will appreciate the ecotourism venture. To test respondents' knowledge about the benefits to derive from ecotourism, questions like 'Do you think respective communities will benefit from the ecotourism venture?' were asked. This was to know whether respondents were aware of the ability of ecotourism to help develop their communities and improve their socio-economic conditions.

The issue of land ownership was the next section. Here, traditional leaders and the respective landowners were asked questions related to the methods of land acquisition in their communities, and whether they would be prepared to give out their land for the enterprise. This section was treated with utmost seriousness because land has been and is still a bone of contention between landowners and governments in parts of the world, especially in ecotourism ventures.

The section, which dealt with attitude, was also important. Its purpose was to find out the host population's reactions to tourists. Questions pertaining to some pitfalls or constraints to ecotourism development in the selected communities were put before respondents to solicit their opinions. Example,

'has there been any conflict(s) in your community every since you settled?' This particular question was necessary since every successful ecotourism should be conflict-free to increase tourist inflow into the destination.

The last segment, which was a questionnaire, requested respondents to give information about their age, gender, educational background, religion, their status or position in the community, and their marital status. Both traditional leaders and workers of the District Assembly answered specific questions.

Pilot study

A period of one week was used for a pilot study in three of the selected villages, namely; Anum-Apapam, Obuoho, and Obuodaka including the Forestry Department, from January 16th to 23rd. A total of 8 respondents were interviewed. The pilot study was for the following purposes;

(a) to help familiarize with the research environment or the study area;

(b) to test the research methods and research instruments and their suitability;

(c) to test the responses of subjects to the method of data collection and through that the adequacy of its structure, among other things.

Reconnaissance survey

February 2004 was used for the reconnaissance survey. The selected communities and the District Assembly were visited to get the opinion leaders informed about the study and to schedule appropriate time to have them interviewed. It was realized that Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and

Saturdays were always busy days for the communities. Owing to this no interview was scheduled for these days. Tours were made from the 2nd to 16th February, a total of three weeks. The survey was helpful because it was realized the use of in-depth interview would be a very effective tool for collecting the needed data in the communities as well as the district assembly.

Data collection

Collection of data was quite cumbersome owing to the long period it took to complete the interview and the cold attitude exhibited by some respondents. It took the researcher the whole of February and March to collect the data. An interview guide was used to elicit information from selected respondents. The interviews were written and recorded simultaneously.

Both traditional leaders, elders, selected workers from MOFA branch in the district, CNC, including respondents at the District Assembly provided the needed data. Observations were also made to help boost the data collected. In all, forty (40) respondents were interviewed. It took 60 to 90 minutes for an interview to be completed. No field assistant was employed owing to the number of respondents selected for the study and the need for an expert in the field of ecotourism, which was not easy to find. Interviewing opinion leaders require an expert.

Limitations and delimitations of the study

Proximity

The communities selected for the study are far from each other. This makes it difficult to meet respondents on time; it also increases the cost on transportation. For example, from Anum-Apapam to Obuoho, another selected community, is 7.5km; Anum-Apapam to Suhum is about 30km and Abommofodensua to Obuotumpan, 39km.

Transportation

Apart from the Anum-Apapam and Suhum road, the other roads leading to the selected communities were all feeder roads, which were very difficult to ply. Vehicles, sometimes, had to overload passengers, or you had to charter or pay for empty seats.

Attitude of respondents and some community members.

Initial arrangements of respondents had to be rescheduled owing to farming activities and other reasons. Some respondents, especially in the communities, were reluctant to have the interview recorded while others insisted on identification, specifically from the District Assembly or the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City. Nevertheless, some respondents were friendly and supportive, especially when they realized one could speak and understand their native language. In some cases rituals had to be performed by the traditional leader before he showed an attraction. The chief then delegated a

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team of people to the site but they also had to collect what they called 'stamp'. In other words, a token fee, without which the researcher will not be allowed to take any picture of the attraction. It was observed that community members perceive researchers as being sent by the government and had no problem with money.

Owing to financial problems and time for the completion of the research, the study was limited to only five communities namely; Anum-Apapam, Obuoho, Obuodaka, Abommofodensua, and Obuotumpan.

Research Instruments

Interviews and observation were used to gather the needed data. The interviews, which were conducted using an interview guide, sought respondents' perception about ecotourism, its benefits, landownership and conflicts. The rest were the host population's attitude towards visitors and tourists alike, constraints to the development of the attractions, and communities' willingness to appreciate and be participants in the ecotourism venture. The questionnaires were designed to cover only respondent's background information. These instruments were pre-tested to check their accuracy and reliability.

Data analysis and presentation

Data was edited, coded and analyzed manually. Respondents' views or opinions on whether ecotourism should be developed, their awareness, landowners' willingness to give out land for the venture, the host populations'

would-be attitude towards tourists and visitors, issues on conflicts, among others were analysed based on the number of responses respondents gave. Some of the views expressed by respondents were expressed in italics (quotations). Observation played significant role and boosted the analysis and interpretations of data.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the method employed for the collection of data for the study. Description of instruments, the sample procedure as well as the method used for the selection of respondents were included in the chapter. The pilot survey, reconnaissance study and problems encountered, as well as respondents' attitude during interviews were also discussed. It was observed that taking a research in a rural area is interesting but could also be challenging.

CHAPTER FOUR

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SELECTED COMMUNITIES AND POTENTIAL ATTRACTIONS

Introduction

This chapter describes the five communities selected for the study; their locations in the district, the ethnic societies as well as attractions which are found in the settlements. This is very important since it motivates tourists to choose destinations of their choice (Haywood, 1990).

Anum-Apapam

About 20 minutes' drive from Suhum iris Anum-Apapam. The community is located on the Suhum-Asamankese trunk road; it is the only tarred road among the other communities selected for the study. The community is made up of different ethnic groups including the Ga-Adangbe, Krobo, Ewe, Dagaare, and Akan. The Guan is believed to dominate the other ethnic groups in the settlement.

The Anum are the true owners of the community land which was purchased by their ancestors from the people of Kibi-Apapam, a community in the Akim Abuakwa traditional area, which later attracted other residents to settle in the community. There is nothing like stool lands in Anum-Apapam.

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Individuals buy and own part of the land, which becomes their property. The individual landowner has every right to disown part of his land to anyone who would want to buy.

Tuesdays and Fridays are market days when other peripheral communities come to sell their farm produce. Such market days attract other traders from Suhum, Asamankese, Akim Oda, as well as Accra. It is the only settlement with a population above five thousand and therefore classified as an urban community, among the selected communities.

The Ayensu River is the major source of water supply for the people. However, there are boreholes and wells as supplement water supply for the community.

Tourism Attractions

Attractions in the community include the Atewa forest. Other businesses like distilling 'Akpeteshie', making of palm kernel and palm nut oil are other attractions that can entice tourists to the community.

Abommofodensua

Residents in this community are mostly Guans followed by theGa-Adangbe. A drive from Suhum (the district capital) takes 30 minutes. The population, according to the chief is about 500. There is no stool land as is the practice in some parts of the country. For this reason an individual may choose to disown part of his property to another by selling it without consulting the

chief or the elders. Cocoa, a cash crop, is grown on a large scale in the community. Owing to this, farming is seen as the major source of employment in the community. Wells and bore holes provide the community with good drinking water.

Attractions

The community boasts of one major attraction; a snake-like palm tree almost like the one located at Obuoho.

Obuotumpan

The community is near Koforidua (the eastern regional capital). The population is about 400. From Suhum, one has to drive through Koforidua since there is not defined route to the settlement at the district capital (Suhum). About 5km of the road to the community is feeder with a lot of pot-holes. Land ownership is the same as the other selected communities. Farming is another means by which a majority of the residents are employed. The Densu River is the major source of water supply for the community and its peripheries. To serve the same purpose, bore holes are also used. Farm produce is conveyed to Koforidua during market days since there are no market days in the community.

A natural stone drummer

Obuotumpan in the Akan language means "one who plays 'Atumpan'''". The 'Atumpan' is an Akan drum used in conveying messages. This stone which

can be located in the Obuotumpan community resembles an Atumpan drummer. It is about 10.5 inches tall. The belief associated with this attraction is that until rituals are performed by the traditional leaders nobody has to point at it else one's hand will shrink. Tourists would easily be attracted owing to its unique look and the rituals. The rituals may be performed at the request of tourists.

Obuoho

The Obuoho communitiy is not as large as that of Anum-Apapam. the population is about 200. The main occupation of the residents is farming. This could be attributed to the fertility of their community land which is suitable for the production of plantain, cocoyam and cassava, among others.

About 7.5 km from Anum-Apapam is Obuoho. The road is feeder and very difficult to ply, especially during the rainy season. There are no specific market days in the community. They are attracted to the Anum-Apapam market where most of their farm produce is supplied. Like Anum-Apapam, land is owned individually. Only a little part is reserved for the stool.

The Obuoho community land was purchased from the people of Kibi (the Akims). The community is made up of the Adangbe and the Guan. Sources of water supply are the Bafoa stream and a bore hole.

Obuoho Water Fall

This splendid waterfall is about 10 minutes' walk from the Obuoho settlement. It is located in the region of the Atewa Forest Range. Although the

attraction is not developed, about 100-200 tourists can have fun on its large rocks, creating about four levels of platforms. If well developed, it can attract many tourists and visitors, especially during national events.

Coiled Palm Trees

Two snakelike palm trees are located in the Obuoho and Abommo-fodensua communities. According to interviewees, the palm trees were resurrected some years after palm wine had been tapped. Since the trees could not stand, they coiled on the ground measuring about 40 inches tall. This is a good opportunity for sight-seeing since it will agitate individuals and tourists alike to visit such an attraction.

Plate 1:   Snake-like Palm Tree, Obuoho

Obuoho Cave

This cave is located in the Atewa Forest. The cave can accommodate about 100 tourists at a time. It is believed to be the dwelling place of many animal species. However, human activities had caused them to flee deep into the forest. One had to go into the cave with torchlight owing to the total darkness inside.
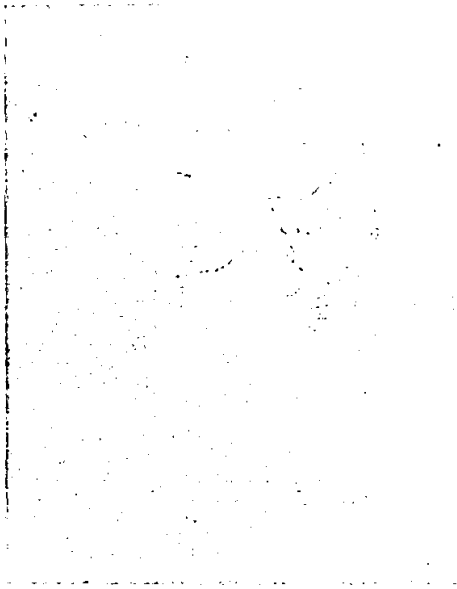
Plate 2: Obuoho Cave, Obuoho

The Atewa Forest

This is the only forest reserve that exists in the district. Besides potential water catchments in the district and store of genetic materials for economic timber species and medicinal purposes, the Atewa Forest has both indigenous and exotic species of flora and fauna. According to respondents in the Obuoho

community, the forest is also home to fauna species like monkeys, duikers, grass-cutters, among others but they live deep inside the forest and come out usually during the evenings or very early in the mornings.

Obuodaka

The community of Obuodaka is not far from Suhum. Like the people of Obuoho, the community does not have any specific market days. However, it is believed that the community use Thursdays and Mondays to sell some of their farm produce and buy the needed items at Suhum.

The community has two sub-chiefs; one for the Guan and the other for the Krobo. Many of the residents are in farming, especially the men. Some of the women are in both palm-kernel and palm-nut oil business as other means of boosting their standard of living. Streams and a number of wells are a source of water supply in the settlement. The community land was, like their counterparts in Obuoho, purchased from the Akim and is owned individually. There is no stool land in the community.

Natural attractions identified in this settlement include Oboom, a great rock formation, Obuodaka, (a boxlike stone) through which water gushes out, and Emiretiti Mountain.

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Obonyame Cave

Many tourists cannot enter this cave through the entrance because it is small. A tourist, on entering, has to crawl between two large granite rocks before straightening up.

Plate 3: Obonyame Cave, Obodaka

This cave, according to the traditional leader in Obuoho, was once the dwelling place for dwarfs and, later, an herbalist. A stone carved to resemble a table surrounded by three chairs is inside one of the apartments in the cave. As the cave is always dark, one needs a light to enter. It is about 1km from the Obodaka community.

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Art, Craft and other Agro-Products

Other attractions in the district are traditional carvers identified in two communities, Kofi-Pare and Suhum (the district capital). The production of handicrafts comes in different types and in large quantities. Some of the works produced include drums, stools and masks, among others. As tourists increase in the district, such works will be patronized, thereby creating employment for the producers or carvers and this will also enable the district to diversify her economy.

The extraction of palm-oil, and palm-kernel oil as well as the distilling of 'Akpeteshie' (a local Ghanaian gin) is a system of wealth creation for the rural people, which ultimately leads to integrated development. This may lead to a new form of tourism called agro-tourism. (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001).

Other Ecotourism Attractions

Many interviewees have disclosed other attractions in the district, which need to be developed to help diversify the district economy. Some attractions like: a palm tree with three head (branches), a rock formation in the shape of a tortoise and others which could be termed as 'gold' are all waiting to be developed not only for the district but for the well-being of the country as a whole.

The role and functions of the District Assembly towards the promotion of tourism

Place promotion, according to Gold and Ward (1995), is the conscious use of publicity and marketing strategy to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience. Place promotion, therefore, may be the selling of a selected package of facilities, or the selling of the place as a whole, through images composed of various attributes associated with it. In this regard, places can be sold as a product to many different groups of consumers with different purposes.

This is because the sale of the product (tourism) does not diminish the stock of its consumption by another. It is important that place promoters identify and segregate specific potential consumers for their products. Place promoters also need to understand that their product has the possibility to compete with other potential products in the market within which free exchange occurs, Gold and Ward (1995). Free in this context implies the freedom of choice of customers between comparative products, free access of products to the potential customers, and a free exchange of product for the same measure value.

Place marketing stratagem

Place marketing can be carried out in different methodologies. However, the activity should be planned and implement by people who have the knowledge of how the product is and also engrossed in the particular product

study in order to consider the characteristics of competing alternatives. What to consider in this regard is the product development.

It is argued that if the product is poor or has no potential market, then, promoting it will be a waste of resources, (Gartrell, 1998). Though a product can gradually improve upon its quality, it is advisable to promote products of high quality and which have the potential to attract consumers to a destination. The question then arises: How can SKCD promote itself to domestic as well as international tourists?

According to Yankah and Arche (2000), the District Assemblies (D.A's) have the following roles to play to aid the promotion and development of tourism in their districts:

a) Designated as the District authority for its area, including planning for tourism development,

b) With the common fund, the DA's have the means to engage in tourism development,

c) Where the tourism potential exists, the D.A. should plan the development of the potential in collaboration with agencies example; Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), among others.

On the other hand too the functions of the D.A, as far as tourism is concerned, are listed below:

a) Be responsible for the overall development of the district;

b) Formulate and execute plans, programmes and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district;

c) Promote and support productive activities and social development in the district and remove any obstacles to initiate development;

d) Initiate and encourage joint participation with other persons or bodies to execute approved development plans;

e) Promote or encourage other persons or bodies to undertake projects under approved development plans.

Furthermore, to ensure a successful tourism the district has the following responsibilities:

   a) Consider tourism as a majority/priority resources area for mobilization for development.

   b) Integrate tourism in socio-economic development. Involve communities in planning.

   c) Consider basic infrastructure for tourists.

   d) Use services of communities in maintaining security and public safety.

   e) Promote/Encourage private sector involvement in tourism development.

   f) Create public awareness about the positive impact of tourism.

   g) Undertake public education on the negative impact of tourism.

What makes SKCD a potential ecotourism destination.

The Eastern Region of Ghana is known for its ecotourism attractions in the country. Examples are Odwira, Ohum and Nymayem Festivals among others. Adding to these are the Aburi Botanical Gardens, the Volta Lake, Boti Falls and unusual rock formation – umbrella rock, among others located at different towns in the eastern region of the country.

Owing to the size and its geographical location and its proximity to Koforidua and Aburi, the district could benefit from spill-over tourists from the already known ecotourism attractions to be more familiarized with the new developed sites.

On the other hand, the district is not far from Accra, the national capital, the hub of international tourists. This can help inflow of tourists from Accra to the district.

The warm attitude of the people is what is always expected to boost the influx of visitors and tourists into an ecotourism community. One is fully convinced after this study that the people in the district would have that good attitude towards visitors, and their willingness to participate in the venture. Furthermore, the temperature, rainfall, humidity, and other variables will be favourable to visitors and tourists alike.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed briefly the attractions and the history about the communities that were purposively selected for the study and how the

district, in her small way, can promote itself through tourism. This is also a form of travel writing, a strong push factor for tourists and visitors to a destination.

The potentiality of an attraction discussed in this study is confined only to the district. This is to create contrast between attraction, believed to have strong pull facilities and the less endowed attractions. What has been discussed in this chapter gives a vivid picture and a positive image about the SKCD as one of the district with the necessary facilities for ecotourism development.

CHAPTER FIVE

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF RESPONDENTS TOWARDS
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM

Introduction

This chapter looks at the responses gathered from the interview and how they affect the ecotourism venture in the district. It further discusses the willingness of landowners to give out their land for the venture, and the communities' participation in the whole set up.

Age and sex distribution of respondents

Respondents' age range from 35 to 66 and above. These included both males and a female. It was found that the majority of respondents are within the age of 51-55 years representing 21.05% of the total. Following this group are respondents whose ages range between 61-65 and 46-50 years, with a percentage of 15.9%. The others follow in that order. (See table 6).

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of males and 3.0% female made up the sample. Only one female was among the opinion leaders interviewed in the communities. This could mean that the selected communities do not accept females as traditional leaders. On the other hand, it could mean that the method used to select communities favoured those with male traditional leaders. It is

also encouraging to have the aged in the decision-making and implementation of the ecotourism venture because, in Ghana, every community respects the views expressed by old men owing to their responsibilities and the important roles they play in our communities. Although, in the planning/decision-making process of the ecotourism venture, views of the youth may contribute to its success, views expressed by elders are considered divine.

Table 6:

Age of respondents

Range	Frequency	Percent%
35-40yrs	7	18.4
41-46yrs	3	7.9
46-50yrs	6	15.9
51-55yrs	8	21.05
56-60yrs	5	13.16
61-65yrs	6	15.79
66yrs+	3	7.9
Total	38	100

Source: Field Survey, 2004

Educational level of respondents

In table 7 (next page) it could be realized that many of the respondents were middle school leavers, topping the group with 19 (47.5%). The data

indicates that a majority of respondents have received formal education. There is this belief that education is the key to success and it hoped that they can contribute to the promotion and development of ecotourism in the SKCD.

Table 7:

Education level of respondents

School	Frequency	Percent%
Middle School	19	47.5
Secondary	6	15
Training College	4	10
Technical/Vocation	2	5
University	3	7.5
Non-formal	6	15
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2004

Status/Position of respondents

Out of the 40 respondents, elders and landowners were the majority. All of them were farmers. This confirms that about 70% of the people in SKCD were farmers (TYMP, 2002-2004). The assemblymen and male traditional leaders were five each while government employees were seven (7). Only one female respondent was among those interviewed. The respondents' views will

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be very useful because it will act as a platform to determine whether to develop the attractions or otherwise.

Marital statuses of respondents

Table 8 displays the marital statuses of respondents. From the table 35 (83%) were married while 2 (5%) were widowed. Three (12%) were divorced. This could mean that marriage is considered when one has to occupy a certain position in the community as well as the district. Moreover the marital status of respondents is important in ecotourism development, especially in the decision-making process as well as the behaviour exhibited by the people (Owusu-Mintah, 2001). From the table, marital status figures show there are a high percentage of married people in the communities. Therefore, the decision-making process and the implementation of the ecotourism venture involving the married in the communities will be very helpful.

Table 8:

Marital statuses of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent%
Married	35	83
Divorced	2	5
Widowed	3	15
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2004

Views of interviewees about tourism

Respondents were asked whether they have any knowledge about tourism. Responses were given based on how each of the respondents understood tourism. Respondents with non-formal education had tourism interpreted to them.

'Visiting places of interest such as the airport, sea and river(s), historical places and natural sites to have fun', were some of the views they had about tourism. A close look at the responses appears that they might have read about it or had some knowledge on the subject. It was observed that those who reacted to the question had received some formal education. It was also detected from the responses that a majority of the respondents could not give any answer or were ignorant about the subject. This could mean that respondents' awareness about tourism is low. Therefore, the need to educate them is very important.

Knowledge about natural attractions in the district

Respondents were asked to mention the attraction(s) they have visited or heard about in the district. A total of 45 responses were gathered. This question was found necessary since it would indicate wither respondents were knowledgeable about the existing natural attractions and the 'hidden' ones in the district or not, and to find out which potential (attractions) were to be developed. It was found that most of the interviewees were able to mention at least one of the attractions but could not identify in which communities such attractions

could be located. It was observed that those who gave accurate responses to this question were residents in the selected communities.

Frequencies of 7 responses were those who knew about the Atewa forest, which is extended to the communities of Anum-Apapam and Obuoho respectively. A snakelike palm tree located at Abommofodensua and a rock formation in the form of a tortoise around Nankese (community) had a frequency of six each. (See table below).

Table 9:

Some attractions in the district

Responses	Frequency
Waterfall on Densu River, Abrodiem	1
Snakelike palm tree, Abommofodensua	6
A form of natural stone drummer, Obuotumpan	5
Obuodaka, Obuodaka	4
Waterfall and cave, Obuoho	4
Waterfall Acheansa	3
A palm tree with three heads (branches)	2
Emeretete mountain, Suhum-Accra road	1
Obonyame, Oboodaka	1
Coiled palm tree, Obuoho	3
Rock formation like tortoise, Nankese	6
Obodan, Atewa forest, Obuoho	1

Table 9: *continued:* Some attractions in the district.

Tetekasum	1
Oboom, Obodaka	2
The Atewa forest	7
Total	48

Source: Field Survey, 2004

It was observed that many of the respondents were aware of only the attractions located within their communities. There were few instances where respondents mentioned attractions that are not in or around their own communities because some respondents have relocated twice or thrice in different communities while others too were hunters.

Responses on visitation to natural attractions

From the study it was detected that a majority of the respondents have not visited any of the attractions, even those ones in their communities which could mean that interviewees have heard about the attractions but have not taken the pains to know their locations. It was observed that chiefs and some landowners do not know any other attraction apart from those located in and around their communities. The study, however, found that extension officers of MOFA (Suhum) knew and have visited, at least, four or five of the attractions. This is not induced by the interest to visit but owing to the nature of their work.

In reacting to the question, the following is what one of the officers of MOFA said:

> You know owing to the nature of our work we know a
> lot of the villages in and around the district. We are
> responsible for educating the farmers on new
> methodologies in farming and any time we happen to be
> in a village where an attraction is located, we are eager
> to see what it really is.

However, some of the opinion leaders said they have visited the places more than once, not for its beauty or interest, but because it is close to their farm. The chief of Obodaka confirmed the above:

> The attraction is on my land. I see the cave anytime I
> visit my farm. I do not understand why I should visit or
> enter the cave when there is a lot of work to be done on
> the farm. As you are saying, if it happens that the
> government should develop these attractions then I
> would be happen to visit. But, for now, I am more
> concerned about my survival.

View of respondents on landownership

To ascertain whether traditional leaders can exercise their authority or extend their powers (in matters of land) over landowners, they are asked whether respective landowners in their communities will give out land (attractions) willingly for the venture. One respondent retorted: 'Such a question must be answered by the landowners'. The response is a clear indication that chiefs in the communities do not have much say when it comes to land issues. This is because land in the communities is individually owned, although in some of the communities there are portions of stool lands. Owing to this, chiefs cannot dictate to landowners what they have to do with their land, although they (chiefs) are portrayed as the mouthpiece of the whole community.

Responses of traditional leaders on their rightful ownership of the community land

Only traditional leaders were to answer this particular question. They were asked where their community land was purchased and who the owners were. The five traditional leaders, four males (chiefs) and a female (queen mother) gave the same answer to the question. According to the responses given, the ancestors of the communities selected for the study bought the land from Kibi (The Akim Abuakwa Traditional Area). This means the land formerly belonged to the Akims, but now they (the communities) are the owners.

However, there are boundaries to help check litigation and encroachment upon another community land.

Views of affected landowners

These were the views of the traditional leaders in the communities. Many of the respondents felt happy when the question: 'What would you suggest for the affected landowners,' was asked, although some of them were not the rightful landowners of the attractions. It was detected from the responses that those who preferred compensation in the form of money dominated the other responses given. However, they stressed that the money should be huge enough to enable them purchase or acquire portions of land either in the community or in another community. On the other hand, others would prefer the investor cater for their children's education up to the university level, or they should be employed as caretakers. One landowner had this to say:

> At the moment I do not benefit from that property (attraction) because it is not developed and until you came it did not occur to me that I can get something good from the attraction. I would like the government to take care of my children (they are only two) up to the university. Some of my children are not doing anything because there is no money to enable them to learn a trade. Besides, they are not good on the farm. It is my

wish they receive some training in the venture so that

they would be employed as workers.

The above substantiate the argument raised by Mathieson and Wall, (1993) that "community residents should be assigned with some responsibilities like voluntarily organizing themselves for clean-up exercises and also be employed as caretakers. Whelan (1991) added that including the local folk gives them the sense of responsibility and pride over their own resources and their own community development,.... and enables effective planning and implementation of whatever policy intended for the locality.

Views of the respective landowners

Although the chiefs are regarded as the mouthpiece of the community it was also necessary to seek the views of the respective landowners concerning the development of the attractions. In some communities in Ghana the chief does not have much say, especially with the issue of buying land from individuals in the community.

Out of the total number of respondents, eight were owners of the attractions in the communities selected for the study. It was realized that the two attractions in the Obuoho community are owned by different landowners; a Krobo and another from Larteh. From the survey it was realized that some of the landowners would not allow investors to buy the attraction. According to them, owning the attraction is enough, while others were of the view that although

they were the rightful owners, some decisions as to the sale of the attractions would be difficult to make. A landowner of Abommofodensua, confirmed their views:

They will become the owners of the attraction which I am not prepared to disown. Even if I have to agree I have to seek the views of my siblings. They will help me to make a very good decision.

In Obodaka, another landowner added: You see, it is always better to have your source of income protected, making it possible for you to feed on, anytime, than to sell it. When it is sold out, it means I will not have any share or benefit of it.

Others believe that since they have not benefit from the attraction(s) for the past years, selling it to the government or an investor would not become a problem. However, they intimated that landowners as well as the community should be given some monies. In the Obuoho community, a landowner said:

I do not think selling it will be any problem. The reason is that after it has been developed, it will help all the community: It will help me get some income since visitors will be visiting the attraction at a fee at the same time the community will also get some percentage to meet its developmental agendas. On the other hand, I think there is the need for the government to given

landowners a huge sum of money to aid them in their farming. Other communities blessed with attractions must also be compensated.

From the study, it was realized that the landowners have few acres of land around attractions which could be used for accommodation purposes. However, none could tell the exact acre(s) of land they owned. Some of the views expressed were on the benefits of the communities. The important ones are as follows:

One landowner said: Actually, I can not tell the exact acre of land I own but I know it is quite large; I can not guarantee to give all the land to be used. One thing I know is that we shall get money to aid the community projects like building of schools and clinics. A landowner in another community added that: Through the venture, the road leading to my community will be reconstructed (tarred) and may look better than this current one.

It was realized that the Atewa forest is conservation and none of the residents owns the Obuoho cave located in the forest. It was also found that the district assembly delegated some people to these communities in order to take

photographs of the attractions, with the hope of developing them but the story ended there. For this reason it was difficult to solicit information from respondents because they think there is nothing good the government can do concerning the attractions. One landowner confirmed this: I remember we escorted some delegates from the district assembly somewhere in 2003, to this very attraction to enable them take photographs. They told us they wanted to develop the attractions but we have been waiting for them to come, may be, they would be in today.

Ecotourism can be successful when key players of the venture are recognized and specific roles assigned them. Landowners must be respected since they can contribute to the success or failure of the ecotourism venture. Views expressed by respondents are an indication that landowners will give their land for the venture; however, they should be compensated.

Perceptions on communities owning the ecotourism venture

The responses from the survey indicated that maintenance will be a problem and, for that matter, communities should not be owners of the venture. This view dominated the other responses given. According to some of the respondents, the community can not be owners of the developed attractions because it may create ill-feelings among individuals in the communities, which could end up in societal conflicts. An Assemblyman who was totally against the idea made the following observations:

I do not think that will be well with this community. We have not reached the level where we can handle the venture. Besides, we lack the know-how to propel the venture successfully. Furthermore, others would not show any seriousness from the start but they will want to share the proceeds equally. This will create ill-feelings or hatred among community members, which may end up in continuous conflict.

The chief of Obodaka had a different opinion. According to him, the community must own the would-be venture. This, he said, can be done successfully when some of the residents are well trained and are capable to run the project. He said: "Our people should be trained to enable them to work in the venture".

This is in agreement with one of the techniques considered for benefiting ecotourism communities enshrined in the NTDP, 1996-2010 prepared by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT). It reads: "Community residents should be trained to work directly in tourist facilities and services such as hotels, craft/souvenir shops, and tour travel services, such as tour guides. Special training programmes may need to be organized or assistance provided to send residents to training elsewhere in the country". Other respondents suggested joint ownership: The government, landowners and the community.

From the results gathered, one is convinced that the communities cannot be owners of the attraction or the venture. In terms of maintenance it is likely the venture could collapse. On the other hand, conflict may erupt as a result of some members selected to play significant roles in the whole set up. From the above reasons, it is recommended that a joint ownership could be the best.

Views of interviewees on living peacefully with visitors/tourists

Tourists do visit destinations where they are sure of peace. The Amboseli National Park and the Kakum National Park in Kenya and Ghana, respectively, are examples where a number of conflicts have been recorded owing to ecotourism. Views on conflicts from the selected communities for the study were therefore found necessary. Peace is always an important and prerequisite is always considered very important whenever tourism is being planned. There have been cases where conflicts erupted between host populations and tourists as a result of attitude (Cheeseman, 2000). It is therefore imperative to know the views of the host population on this particular subject.

It was realized from the responses gathered that since members settled, the communities have always been without any major form of conflicts such as clashes between two ethnic groups. According to one respondent, some of the community members used to quarrel among themselves but he said that could not be a major setback in the ecotourism development. Asked what were the causes of the quarrels he said, "It is about land litigation and, some men 'chasing' other residents' wives".

Land litigation and other issues involving land should be addressed properly since it is known to be one of the major causes of ethnic and community clashes in Ghana.

Others think because Ghana is a hospitable nation there will be continuous peace in the communities. The assembly member of Anum-Apapam confirmed this: Ghana is a hospitable nation; we shall make sure not to tarnish the image of our dear country. We shall live peacefully with whoever visits our community.

However, peace may possibly be destroyed when some tourists would not respect the laws and dignity of the host but decide to bring the host community integrity to disrepute (Davidson, 1993).

Views on pitfalls/constraints to ecotourism development

Constraints to the development of tourism are a major problem facing developing nations, and Ghana is no exception. In Ghana, the following have been noted as contributory factors to the 'crawling' nature of the nation's tourism development: poor road access, absence of receptive facilities and poor interpretation of the relevance of some of the physical features (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001). Others in Sub-Saharan Africa include: need to improve the infrastructure of tourism, health problems, wars, high crime rates, corrupt Government, among others, (Yankah & Arche, 2000).

A majority of the responses were in agreement with lack of social amenities like good drinking water and good toilet among others. To others, access to the natural attraction will destroy people's properties hence the need to compensate the would-be affected residents. Lack of financial support, language barrier, to some, would be a problem in the communities. It was realized that some of the responses were in agreement with the possible constraints to tourism development in sub-Saharan Africa documented by Yankah and Arche (2000).

Views to overcome constraints

According to Yankah & Arche (2000), constraints to tourism can be overcome or, at least, mitigated by effective planning, development and management. Respondents were asked to indicate the possible means to overcome such constraints. From the responses, a majority of the respondents were of the opinion that negotiations before development is imperative. An elder from the Obuoho community said: We would prefer that the developers meet us and dialogue over what you are telling us. They have to see the landowners and, if possible, the whole communities for a successful take off.

According to a worker of MOFA, drinking water should be checked against diseases since contaminated water can mar the influx of tourists to the community. However, others thought the only means to overcome such constraints is when landowners agree to give their land for the venture because without land, they believe, ecotourism cannot survive. This agrees with Ahai, (2000), that there is a general perspective that landowners play a limited role,

apart from signing their land off for large-scale forestry or ecotourism development.

Views on the success of ecotourism in the district

Respondents were asked to give reasons why ecotourism venture would be successful in the district. Some responded that it will be successful because residents will volunteer themselves whenever their help is needed to support the venture. Others were convinced that businesses would be boosted when the attractions are developed, while some argued that 'It will improve upon the lives of residents'. From the various views expressed, it was realized that those who thought the attractions in the district would be successful in that it will compete with others in the region dominated the other responses. The following is what the assemblyman of the Obodaka said: I believe when these attractions are developed people will visit this community instead of going to Boti Falls and places they have visited before. I do not think residents and communities around would want to travel to Koforidua when there is a similar attraction in their locality.

This is not always true. It largely depends on the type of attraction and the perception tourists might have concerning it. In a similar fashion, Lumsdon et al (2001) asserted that the perception visitors have about a destination might definitely influence their ability to either take the trip or change their mind towards another destination.

Responses on measures to ensure eco-friendliness

The environment plays a central role in the concept of ecotourism. It is therefore imperative to have some knowledge of whether host communities and the district as a whole understand and practice eco-friendliness. For this reason, the question 'What measures are being put in place to encourage eco-friendliness' was asked. Many responses were given; the major ones were that the district has been educating the people against some of the negative environmental practices like farming along rivers or streams and illegal felling of trees. However, some could not give any response on the subject.

Views on whether the measures are effective

This was to find out whether the practice of eco-friendliness is effective in the communities. Some of the responses showed that respondents from the district assembly agreed that they have been playing effective role in ensuring eco-friendliness. Some of them said trees are planted along rivers and those who violate the laws are punished. Differing, the traditional leaders and some landowners spoke against the view. The queen mother of Obuoho who was not in agreement with the responses given by respondents from the district assembly retorted:

> Concerning eco-friendliness, I think the district assembly has not done much in terms of education. For some time now, we do not see forest guards in our

communities. Some years ago, before you set fire to a cleared bush, a farmer had to invite volunteers to do those jobs in order to avoid bush burnings. These services are no more.

A critical look at these responses indicates that the district assembly has put in efforts to ensure and educate its members on eco-friendliness, but enforcing the laws is a great problem.

Respondents' views on negative impacts of ecotourism

Negative impact of ecotourism venture is always important since it helps developers to know the necessary action to take during their preparation to develop the attractions. The host communities also become aware of some of the problems the ecotourism venture is likely to bring to the settlements, among others.

Many of the respondents intimated that if land acquisition for the venture is not complete it might create a lasting misunderstanding between developers and landowners, which can mar the success of the venture. From the survey it was realized that the responses gathered have similar views with Davidson (1993, Lumsdon and Swift, 2000), especially on the issue of culture adulteration and the spread of diseases. Others asserted that problems arise when social amenities are not provided and when some of the community members are not included in the venture. This is also in consonance with the observation made by

Yankah & Arche (2000). "Local residents should be given the priority to work in tourism enterprises". However, none of the respondents spoke about negative attitude by some tourists, their lifestyle and their dressing among others. It was observed that respondents were more mindful about the within but not the without and seem not to give credence to some of the negative impacts of tourism observed by Davidson, (1993). (See literature review).

Views on positive impacts of tourism

It is always important to know whether respondents are aware of the need and the importance to develop attractions, especially when they know it could bring some socio-economic relief to their community(s).

Various views were expressed but the dominant ones were: the provision of social amenities, social and economic lives will be improved, and employment of especially the youth, into the business. It was realized that those who were able to respond to this question were workers from MOFA and the district assembly. The results could mean that respondents have some knowledge about the significance of tourism (ecotourism) to national development.

Ecotourism awareness

The subject of ecotourism awareness was found to be difficult for many of the respondents. It was observed that even some interviewees who had received formal education had a problem in responding to this particular

question. It was detected that those who responded to this question were those who had some knowledge about the subject either in the literature or from the radio. In the communities, many had no idea about what ecotourism is. Even those who were able to contribute to the subject could not give vivid explanations. From the various views given, those who said ecotourism is about the environment dominated. According to others, it is about ecological sites. It was observed that a majority of the respondents were ignorant on the subject. This can be attributed to the fact that the district does not have a Tourism Planning Committee to see to it that members are well educated on the subject. The results conclude that respondents and, for that matter, residents' awareness of ecotourism in the district is very low.

Respondents' views on participation

Ecotourism can never be successful without the participation of the local community. Their views or suggestions should be welcomed and critically analysed during the decision-making process (Dei, 2000). They (host communities) must see themselves as part of the ecotourism business. They must not be neglected. From the responses given it was convincing that the traditional leaders would give their maximum support to the venture. Some of them were optimistic that even when there is no place to accommodate tourists they would offer places for them. A landowner said: "I will be even happy to accommodate these white people in my house".

Asked whether residents would like to visit the attractions when developed, another landowner said:

> We don't have any place to visit during national holidays so I think the patronage will be high, provided the fee charged will be low to encourage our participation. We want to be recognized as landlords. What I want to say is this; we should be part of the business.

Others suggested that they can organize communal labour to aid the success of the ecotourism venture in their communities. This is in agreement with the views expressed by Whelan (1991) that local participation empowers and gives the locals the sense of responsibility over their own resources and control over their community development as a result of the direct and indirect benefit they derive.

Benefits from ecotourism venture to communities/and the district

The host community should be aware of the benefits they will derive from the ecotourism venture. This awareness will make them release their land and other things needed for the speedy development of the venture. From the survey it was detected that some respondents know the benefits the communities will derive after development of the attractions. Although various views were expressed, those who said their communities would benefit from infrastructural

development and education were the major ones. The chief of Anum-Apapam confirmed the above: I know that when tourists visit our community we shall get income and also our schools will be developed. Our community shall also learn from them, which, to me, is okay.

According to some officials, the district assembly will benefit from the proceeds that will accrue from tourists at the communities and contribute to building the district's image both locally and internationally. Responses given indicated that members are knowledgeable about addressing socio-economic issues through ecotourism.

Respondents' perception on willingness to give out land for the venture

Traditional leaders were asked to given their opinions on whether respective landowners will give their land for the venture. This was to find out whether their views will be different from that of the respective landowners. It was realized from the responses that although some of them do not own any of the attractions, they believed their colleagues would not hesitate to give out land to be developed. The chief of Obuotumpan stated: "I believe they will give it out because they are not using it for anything. However, it would be necessary for you to see them".

One can deduce from what the chief said that the individual (landowner) is the bet person to consult when one wants to buy s a piece of land in that community. This means that the chief, although regarded as the mouthpiece of

his people does not have the authority to sell ones property without the one's knowledge. The landlord is therefore the final decision-maker in respect to sale of land.

Findings from the survey

Based on the data collected from respondents on ecotourism awareness, the results concluded that respondents' awareness on the subject is very low.

Respondents are willing to participate in the ecotourism venture since they believe the venture will generate income for their communities and that it will bring about community development, among others. It was observed that they would prefer to be part of the decision makers, and help to implement the ecotourism venture in their communities.

Views expressed by respondents on ecotourism benefits indicated that they (respondents) know the benefits ecotourism will bring to their communities. It was detected from the survey that the landowners interviewed were prepared to give out their land for the venture. However, a majority of them would not sell it out completely to developers but rather they would prefer a joint-ownership.

Constraints to the development of ecotourism in the district include lack of experts in the field of ecotourism, poor access to communities and lack of financial aid.

The study also found the SKCD as a conflict-free destination. However, one cannot tell whether the good atmosphere of peace the district is enjoying now shall continue to exist after the arrival of tourists.

Discussions

The results gathered suggest strongly that ecotourism venture in the SKCD can be successful. What is required are the necessary resources for the development of some of the selected potential attractions in the district, especially in the communities where the research was conducted.

It may be recalled that the consensus model adapted for this study proposes that it is imperative for the venture to take off after a successful negotiation with the investors, landowners/community, and the district assembly. There is the need, therefore for all the factions to arrive at a consensus so as to avoid any form of imposition, either from the district assembly or any other body, with regards to the decision-making and the implementation of the ecotourism of the ecotourism venture.

The study revealed that all the traditional leaders interviewed as well as the landowners were prepared for the ecotourism venture. The landowners are willing to give their land and the attractions to be developed, and the chiefs also pledged their maximum participation for the would-be venture in the communities.

The district assembly and the Centre for National Culture (CNC) although believed that such attractions should be developed to help diversify the district's economy, they complained bitterly of inadequate financial resources to

develop the attractions. They will, however, welcome developers or investors to help project the image of the district through ecotourism.

For a successful ecotourism venture in the SKCD to take off, it is mandatory for the major stockholders to arrive at a consensus and recognize the full participation of each member.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Ecotourism is useful in that it comes in, among other benefits, to save our natural resources like forests, rivers, mangrove swamps and hills, from over-exploitations by other sectors like logging, agricultural expansion and mining. ('Graphic Showbiz' July 31-Augst 6, 2003 PP 11).

According to Richard and Julia (1997), ecotourism (rural tourism) has much potential to a developing nation. They based their arguments on three major benefits, which are discussed below:

Economic benefit

According to the rural tourism, ecotourism represents an important additional or new source of income to rural communities. As a result;

- New jobs may be created in tourism related businesses, such as accommodation, catering, retailing, transport and entertainment;

- Existing employment opportunities in services such as transport, hospitality or medical care, and in more traditional rural industries and crafts are safeguarded;

- The local economy becomes diversified, providing a broader and more stable economic base for the local community;

- New businesses may be attracted to the area, further diversifying and strengthening the local economy whilst reducing the need for state subsidy of farming.

Social benefits

Contributing to a variety of social benefits to rural communities the following benefits were identified:

- The maintenance and support of local services such as public transport and health care;

- New facilities and attractions, such as cultural or entertainment facilities or sports centers;

- Increased social contact in more isolated communities and opportunities for cultural exchange;

- Greater awareness and revitalization of local customs, crafts and cultural identities, among others.

Environment benefits

According to the authors (Richard & Julia, 1997), the prime motivation for visiting the countryside is the rural environment. They concluded that the success of ecotourism development depends upon an attractive environment and tourism as a whole. The environment gives the following benefits:

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- Provides both the financial resources and the stimulus for the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural rural environment;

- Supports the preservation and improvement of the historic built environment, including country houses, gardens and parklands;

- Leads to environmental improvement in rural towns and villages.

In spite of these benefits ecotourism presents, it has some negative impacts on the resources. This means ecotourism potentials cannot be tapped without costs, effects on the environment, and risks of depletion. (Richard and Sharpley, 1997). These are the economic, social and environmental costs.

It cannot be disputed that tourism is now actively promoted as the new 'cash crop', the panacea to the economic problems facing rural areas or rural towns. (Richard and Sharpley, 1997). It is for this and other purposes that the study was undertaken to sell such potentials in the SKC District to Ghanaians and the outside world in order to diversify the economy. The study was therefore focused on the following specific objectives:

- To catalogue potential ecotourism sites in the district;

- To assess the level of ecotourism awareness in the district;

- The determine the communities' willingness to participate in ecotourism ventures; and

- To assess the expected benefits of both the host communities and the district assembly.

The following research questions were considered necessary for the study:

- Are respondents aware of ecotourism?

- Would members be willing to participate in ecotourism ventures?

- Would the development of ecotourism bring significant changes in the lives of members?

- How would ecotourism benefit the respective communities as well as the district?

- Would landowners be willing to give out land for the venture?

- What would be some of the pitfalls to the promotion of ecotourism in the district?

To achieve the specific objectives of the study, a total of forty(40)respondents were selected from various communities and other workplaces in the district. An in-depth interview was conducted using an interview guide. Purposive sampling was the method used to select respondents. The qualitative method was employed.

Summary of findings and policy implications

Based o the data collected from respondents on ecotourism awareness, the results concluded that respondents' awareness on the subject is very low, implying that the district needs to educate its residents on the subject to help the ecotourism venture in the district.

Respondents are willing to participate in the ecotourism venture since they believe the venture will generate income for their communities and will

bring about community development, among others. It was observed that they would prefer to be part of the decision makers, and help to implement the ecotourism venture in their communities. This also implies the need to involve communities, especially landowners and traditional leaders, in the decision-making and the implementation of the venture for a successful ecotourism business.

Views expressed by respondents on ecotourism benefits indicated that they (respondents) know the benefits ecotourism will bring to their communities and would therefore welcome the idea of a developer developing the 'waste' attractions, provided it will cause some kind of change in their lives.

It was observed from the survey that the landowners interviewed were prepared to give out their land for the venture. However, a majority of them would not sell it out entirely to developers but, rather, they would prefer some joint enterprise or share from the proceeds.

Constraints to the development of ecotourism in the district include: lack of experts in the field of ecotourism, poor access to communities, and lack of financial aid, among others. This implies that developers would go through some difficulties at the developing stage. They must therefore not rely on the district for financial support. The study also found the SKCD as a conflict-free destination, meaning doing ecotourism business in the district could be successful. However, one cannot tell whether the good atmosphere of peace the district is enjoying now shall continue to exist after the arrival of the tourists.

Many developing countries now regard tourism as an important and integral part of their economic development strategies (Yankah and Ache, 2000). Tourism is perceived as a panacea for their fragile economics that are characterized by a scarcity of development resources such as finance and expertise.

Most developing countries, specifically in Africa, examples: Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, have since long developed their attractions, thereby increasing tourist inflow into their countries and Africa so far as ecotourism is concerned.

Ghana's tourism is not as developed as one finds in a number of countries in Africa. Tourism is, however, playing a significant role in the national economy. Currently, it is the fourth largest generator of annual foreign exchange for the country. To help diversify the country's economy, the 15-year tourism development plan urges all the ten regions to form Regional Tourism Development Committees to develop, if not all, some potential tourist sites in the district and the region as a whole.

Tourism is good, especially for developing countries, in that it helps create jobs and income to support the host community, (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Traditional arts and crafts are what many of the youth especially in the rural areas of the country engage in. Ghana is seriously finding solution to its unemployment problem, and since the only means through which the youth could survive is the continuous production of artifacts, the following are recommended: The Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations should

organize workshops for these talented artists and give them the required training to enable them produce quality and authentic handiworks. At the end of such training, they should be made to impart and transfer the acquired knowledge to other artists in their communities. On the other hand, the various art production centers should be visited and awards given to groups that stick to the production of quality and authentic works. Furthermore, annual regional and national competitions or exhibitions could also be organized for traditional crafts (NTDP 1996-2010).

Limitations and recommendations for future research

A number of lapses easily emerged when undertaking the study. For example, the study could not cover all communities in the SKCD; also it could not assess the impact of the venture on all the selected communities. This could be attributed to the short period of time expected for the completion of the work, and lack of financial support. Future research is therefore recommended to cover the communities not included in the study in order to bring to the general public, other potential attractions to help boost the economy of the district. Other studies are recommended in the area of demand of tourists to the district. This will help to know the perceptions tourists and visitors have about the district, and their willingness to visit the attractions there. It is also recommended that the developers negotiate with the respective landowners so that those who want to be compensated are settled before the development so as to ensure a conflict-free ecotourism venture. This study projects the image of the SKCD as a

destination for viable ecotourism venture. However, members of the district have little education on the subject. It is recommended that the district organizes programmes in all her communities in order to increase members' level of education on ecotourism before development of any of the attractions begin. Experts in the field are therefore needed to champion the success of the venture.

Further research is also recommended in the area of ecotourism to be guided by the following:

- The demand of ecotourism as a product in SKCD;
- The supply of ecotourism as a product in SKCD; and
- Access to the countryside as a result of the construction of motorable roads.

Tourism in Ghana has become a multi-million-dollar service industry (Yigrilaa, 2001). There is therefore the need for each of the ten regions of the country to develop her potential attractions, as mentioned in the nation's 15-Year Tourism Development Plan, to enhance socio-economic development.

Furthermore, for the benefit of the district in particular and the country as a whole, it is recommended that the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City budget some money for the speedy development of attractions in the SKCD district. Both international and local NGOs, especially those involved with environmental issues, could help develop the attractions. Other international organizations, public and private funding institutions, national cultural committee and many others (Aidoo-Taylor, 2001), should also aid the development of these attractions.

It should be known that the success of the ecotourism venture would depend largely on the district. The results gathered from the study have positive implications so far as the development of the attractions are concerned.

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UNVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OPINION LEADERS

TOURISM AWARENESS

1. Have you ever heard about tourism?

    If YES what do you think it is?

2. In your opinion what do understand by ecotourism

3. Do you know of some natural attractions in you area/district?

    If YES please what are they?

    Kindly name the communities these attractions can be located.

4. Have you visited any of the above attractions before?

    If YES what for?

    If NO Why?

WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

5. Do you think your community would like to participate in an

    ecotourism venture?

    If YES give at least THREE reasons

    If NO give at least THREE reasons

BENEFIT

QUESTIONS 6-8 FOR NON-TRADITIONAL LEADERS

6. Do you think respective communities will benefit from the ecotourism venture?

   If YES in which areas?

   If NO give at least TWO reasons

7. What about the district assembly?

   (Respondents should give about 4 specific areas)

QUESTIONS 8-12 FOR ONLY TRADITIONAL LEADERS

8. Do you think there is enough land in your community for ecotourism venture

9. Who are the owners?

10. When/How Did your community become owners of this Land?

11. How does one become a landowner in this community?

12. Do you think respective landowners will give out their land for the venture?

    If YES why do you think so?

    If NO why do you say so?

13. What would you suggest for the affected landowners?

14. Do you think the host communities should be owners of the ecotourism venture?

    If YES why do you say so?

    If NO give at least TWO reasons

RESPECTIVE LANDOWNERS

15. i How did you become the owner of that piece of Land?

    ii. How many acres is the land?

    iii. What type(s) of crop do you grow on your land?

    iv. Do you know of any attraction(s) in this area?

    v. Do you have one in your land? If YES please describe it.

    vi. What have you been using it for/have you benefited from it?

    vii. If YES what are the benefits

    viii. If NO will you give out your land/attraction to be developed?

    ix. If YES why?

    x. If NO explain.

    xi. Is there enough land around the attraction to put up guest houses?

    xii. Suppose the government/an investor wants to buy the attraction, what would be your reaction.

    xiii. Do you have any suggestions in connection to the above?

ATTITUDE

16. Do you think the host population would live peacefully with tourists? Please explain.

CONSTRAINTS

17. What do you consider as some pitfalls to ecotourism development in your areas/district (Give at least 4 reasons)

18. Do you think ecotourism will be successful in your district?

    At least 4 reasons.

ECO-FRIENDLY

19. What measures are being put in place to encourage eco-friendliness?

    Are they being effective?

    If YES how?

    If NO why?

CONSTRAINTS

20. Do you think there are some constraints to the promotion and development of ecotourism in your area/district?

21. Do you think such constraints can be overcome?

    If YES give reasons

22. What negative impacts do you think the development of ecotourism will have on the host community?

23. What positive impacts do you think the development of ecotourism will have on the host community?

CONFLICTS

24. Was there any conflict(s) in your community ever since you settled?

   If YES what was the cause of the conflict

25. How was it resolved?

   a) Were the factions satisfied with the resolution

   b) If YES how do you say so?

   c) If NO why?

26. In Your opinion what do you think should have been done?

BIO-DATA

1. Age

2. Gender: Male [   ] Female   [   ]

3. **Educational Background**

   a) Middle School   [   ]

   b) Secondary   [   ]

   c) Training College   [   ]

   d) Technical/Vocational   [   ]

   e) Polytechnic   [   ]

   f) University   [   ]

   g) Other (specify)   [   ]

4. **Religion**

Christian   [   ]

Moslem   [   ]

Other (specify)   [   ]

5. **What is your status/position in the community?**

6. **Marital Status**

a) Married   [   ]

b) Single   [   ]

c) Divorced   [   ]

d) Widowed   [   ]

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